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Truth and Character Vindicated:

BEING A

REVIEW

OF

HON. CALEB BUTLER'S HISTORY

OF THE

ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS OF PEPPERELL.

BY

A COMMITTEE

OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THAT PLACE.

THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY CHICAGO

Published by order of the Church.

BOSTON:

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1849.

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REVIEW

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PEPPERELL, MASS. CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Truth and character vindicated: being a review of Hon. Caleb Butler's history of the ecclesiastical affairs of Pepperell. By a committee of the Church of Christ in that place. Published by order of the church. Boston, Marvin, 1849.

49p.

SHELF CARD

Signed by the committee, headed by David Andrews.

An attack on two chapters in Butler's History of the town of Groton, published 1848.

3890

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TO THE PUBLIC.

The Committee chosen to carry into effect the following vote of the church, namely: "*Voted*, That a Committee of Five be chosen to prepare a Review of Caleb Butler, Esq.'s History of the Ecclesiastical Affairs of Pepperell, and of other documents, so far as they are thought to give a partial or perverted view of facts in relation to this church, and to Rev. James Howe, its late pastor, from his call and settlement, to 1848,"—reported the following Review, which was adopted by the church, April 12th, and ordered to be published. It is now, according to the direction of the same body, given to the public, dedicated to all candid and impartial judges of truth and justice, by

DAVID ANDREWS,
NEHEMIAH CUTTER,
SAMUEL FARRAR,
ARNOLD HUTCHINSON,
VRYLING SHATTUCK,
} *Committee of the Church.*

PEPPERELL, April 30, 1849.

3890

REVIEW.

The essential qualifications of a historian are,—a full knowledge of his subject, an unprejudiced mind in view of the facts concerned, a wise selection of them, impartiality in the treatment of his subject, together with an ability to set it forth in a lucid and interesting manner.

With the latter qualification, so far as it concerns the book in question, we have no concern. But, so far as this book claims to give a history of ecclesiastical matters in this place from the time specified, the violations of the previous principles are so many and so palpable—they so seriously affect the character of this church, and especially the moral integrity of its late worthy and esteemed pastor, Rev. Mr. Howe, as to call for some animadversion and correction.

As prefatory to our task, we cannot forbear an expression of our surprise, that a citizen of another town, in no way connected with this, *volunteering* to give us a history of our own affairs, should attempt, with all the feelings of a religious partisan, to meddle with the minute particulars of certain parochial questions and proceedings, which, but a short time since, had divided the community, and arrayed its members in hostile parties. Doubtless this instance is singular; we never knew the like. A wise and judicious man would perceive at once, that he would be in the greatest danger of failing to do justice to his subject,

and of injuring one party or the other equally concerned in his representations. Especially must this be so, when a man allows himself to rely upon *ex parte* and prejudiced statements. In cases like this, historians generally content themselves with giving some general statement of the facts, equally acceptable to all parties concerned. But Mr. Butler seems to have been restrained by no considerations of this kind. This course would not satisfy such an ambition as his. He seems to have been determined to make a picture of the ecclesiastical affairs of this town, that should contain the *minutiæ*, and to give them a shading that should reflect great credit upon "the more liberally inclined," or "the good people of Pepperell generally," as he denominates such in one place, and the greatest discredit upon all, who were not of these "good people." Excluded from that favored class, were Mr. Howe, and, as he allows, a "large majority of the church;" yea, he might have learned, a majority to the very last responsible man, and likewise a very large majority of the religiously disposed people of the place, who adhered to him during all his trials with the town, or first parish, and who cherish his memory and his principles with the liveliest interest still. But the charity of our historian gathers within its sweep, as "good," all those, who find some other place more congenial to the cultivation of "their virtues," than any house of religious worship whatever. In executing the plan which he proposed to himself, Mr. Butler certainly must have been "indebted to his imagination for his facts" — at least some of them, as we shall show, or he must have resorted to partial sources for them. We fear that he indulged his *feelings* with respect to some others concerned. It is this partisan character of his work of which we complain;—it is this which has imposed our unwelcome task upon us;—it is this which has condemned his book, where the facts are known, and so well nigh banished it from the place.

Were it not deemed important to do something to disabuse the minds of the unwary from the influence of such distorted representations as are found in this work, and for the correct information of future generations, we might remain silent, and suffer the very slight injury which such a book can do the living. But with a sense of duty to those who have not now the truth in the case, to the worthy but injured dead, and to those who shall come after us, we address ourselves to our task.

Did we regard it as our province, we might animadvert severely upon the manner in which this writer trifles with the views of that holy and good man, the first pastor of this church, upon the agency of fallen spirits in promoting the dissensions of men, and the like; the manner in which he talks of "the corruptions of the saints" in this place, in early times, on the question of locating their first place of worship; and the witless story he chronicles concerning a street squabble on removing the timber from the first to the second location selected for the meeting-house. He even gives the *names* of the parties, which he brings into the encounter, as if to disgrace them to their inheritors, and then sends his book to such, to buy and read! But he acknowledges he borrowed this story from "tradition." Would not wisdom have taught him there to leave it? Such things are unworthy the proper dignity of a historian. How shall we account for their introduction into a work bearing so honorable a title as that of a history? Was it not an oversight, not to say an infirmity?

We stop not to dispute with this author upon the opinion he advances, that the Rev. Joseph Emerson, the first pastor of this church, "had more liberality and Christian charity, and less dogmatism and bigotry, than many of the New England clergy," nor to question the right of a gentleman of quite another profession, as it were *ex cathedra*, to denounce such men as Rev. Jonathan Edwards, calling their theology "*unscriptural—absurd and contradictory*

dogmas," and such like. President Edwards's world-wide reputation, as a divine, a theologian and a metaphysician, cannot be injured by such a *liberal* bespattering of ungracious epithets as the above. It is well ascertained, that Mr. Emerson's theology abated nothing from that of Edwards, Whitfield and kindred spirits, with whom he was in perfect sympathy, as has been already made known to the public, and, if needful, might still further be shown by giving extracts from his manuscripts.

We are happy to find Mr. Butler so candid as to acknowledge that Mr. Emerson's successor, "in his theological opinions, probably differed but little from his predecessor." After this just concession, it is of very little moment what he conjectures of Mr. Bullard's "liberality," and of his "regrets" that parishes should be divided for the sake of religious opinion. Mr. Bullard was truly so "liberal" as to second heartily the movements of those, whom truth and a good conscience led, where, with "none to molest or make them afraid," they could hear the gospel preached in its simplicity and its purity. A few simple facts are worth more than many wishful surmisings. Six days before Mr. Bullard died, and as his last "act and testimony" in behalf of the gospel, he took an *active part* in ordaining a man over a Calvinistic church—so named distinctively at the time—composed of those recently separated from the old parish because of its degenerate faith. Another indisputable fact, to which a multitude of living witnesses can testify, is, that Mr. Bullard systematically instructed the children of the town from "*The Assembly's Shorter Catechism*;" a work, whose evangelical and Calvinistic character, we presume, every one will grant is sufficiently distinct. His custom was to devote a part of Saturday to this service, and rotate with the several schools in their order. Of his faith and practice, his son-in-law, J. Breck, Esq., of Boston, who was then a member of his church, writes as follows:—

"There has been much said about Mr. Bullard's liberality. It is true he was a liberal man, but not in the sense the Unitarians would make it appear. I was a boarder in his family for the last eighteen months, and do not remember an exchange with a single Unitarian, unless Mr. Lawrence of Tyngsboro,' or some of the old clergy, were of that stamp. He had not exchanged with Dr. Thayer, [of Lancaster,] for many years, nor with any of the young Unitarians, or those of the modern stamp." Now these "young Unitarians, or those of the modern stamp," affect to honor the venerable dead by drawing him over to their side with their artful cords; or, at least, by holding him at a respectable distance from Orthodoxy, so that it has been sagely declared, "if he had only lived *long enough*," he would have come quite over, and become not only almost, but altogether such as they are. We are happy in the fear, that their waiting would be somewhat like that of the rustic on the river bank, waiting for the river to flow by, that he might "pass over dry shod." *Labitur et labetur in eternum,—it flows on and will forever.* What kind of honor is this, then, that is thus done the second minister of this place? An attempt is made to pin a creed upon him, that he certainly did not *usually* exhibit. Truly he cannot be honored by such imputable inconsistency. Could the dead speak out, as these new claimants gather around his tomb, to pay their unwelcome offerings, would it not be to exclaim, "Save me from my friends!"

But we pass to the main object of this Review,—an examination of Mr. Butler's statements, in relation to the settlement of the third minister of this town, the Rev. Mr. Howe, the conditions of that settlement, and his difficulties with the town, or old parish. He first represents the town as taking great precautions to procure a minister who would be liberal in the matter of exchanges, without regard to religious sentiment; next, that Mr. Howe, on

the day of his ordination, through his ordaining council, from regard to the fears of certain remonstrants, that he might prove exclusive in his ministerial exchanges, made a solemn promise to his parishioners, that he would exchange with all Congregational ministers indiscriminately. He then represents that Mr. Howe, overawed by "the authors and abettors of the exclusive system," violated that promise, and so became the guilty cause of rending asunder a hitherto united and harmonious community, and of producing all the evils consequent upon such a schism. We have been surprised at the coolness with which such serious charges are recorded in this book, and set up at a market price in the very faces of those who know their incorrectness. However, it requires not so much courage, after all, as certain other qualifications, to go into a tomb and call the dead hard names, and "lay many and grievous complaints against such, which they cannot prove." Dead men are not apt to harm any one,—a fact, which may have emboldened some champions in this kind of service. If a man possesses a certain amount of theologic spleen, he will be as well qualified, and as strongly tempted, to perform such an unenviable office, as any character whatever. Yet it is not very wise, nor charitable, to indulge such a disposition as this. Could Mr. Butler think that the ignoble daring of some, much younger than himself in such kind of adventures, furnished him with an example which would justify him in forgetting even the good old heathen maxim,—"*Nil mortuis, nisi bonum,*"—*nothing concerning the dead, unless it be good*, and of so wantonly violating a good man's grave? To be able to plead a precedent, is by no means always a justification for an act. To show that one is only a *partaker* of another man's sin, lessens not his criminality.

The paragraphs containing these serious charges and misrepresentations, are found on pages 320, 321 and 322,

of Mr. Butler's book. They commence and continue on, with a little more than the usual positiveness and acrimony of liberal writers, whenever they attempt to set forth the religious opinions or practices of evangelical Christians. The writer proceeds as follows, (p. 320.)

"They [a large portion of the clergy of New England] had therefore come to the determination not to exchange pulpit services with Arminians, Unitarians, and other liberal denominations of Christians; denying them even the name of Christians. To this 'exclusive system,' as it has been called, which, with the relaxation from all legal obligation to support any religious instruction or public worship, about that time and since, has rent most of the towns and territorial parishes asunder, and set at variance Christian friends and neighbors, the Rev. Mr. Bullard, while living, and the good people of Pepperell generally, were strongly opposed. On the occasion therefore of settling a minister, caution was taken to pursue such measures as should prevent the town and church, hitherto remarkable for their unanimity, from division. In selecting a council to assist in the ordination of their pastor elect, they took pastors and delegates from eleven congregations, who were in favor of the exclusive system, and from nine who were more liberally inclined, intending, if possible, to be on terms of communion and fellowship with all regular Congregational churches and societies. As Mr. Howe's education and associations had been with the party favoring exclusiveness, some fears were entertained that he might be inclined to join with them in their measures."

Here are the alleged precautions, liberal purposes and the fears of the town stated. What authority Mr. Butler has for asserting that the town, or "*the good people generally*," were so desirous of securing a "liberal" minister, is yet to come to light, unless he uses these general terms as a kind of modern *privilege*, applicable only to "the more liberally minded." It is not true that the "*people generally*"—not to say *good*, in the sense of this author—desired a Unitarian, but an Orthodox minister, as all their proceedings and votes show. A Unitarian candidate did preach a few Sabbaths, before Mr. Howe was presented to the people. They, however, let the Unitarian pass on, and chose Mr. Howe, knowing him to be evangelical in his sentiments, and educated at a sacred school, favoring "exclusiveness" in *the Christian sense*. A large majority "earnestly desired his ordination," because his faith was their faith, and it was only a minority that

wished to introduce a man of "another gospel," new to the people of this town.

But the writer proceeds with a very remarkable passage. The structure is remarkable, because its basis is like that of an inverted cone. It needs all its friends around it to hold it up. He says,—

"In order therefore to prevent all misunderstanding on that point, [exclusive exchanges] some of the legal voters, to the number of seventy-nine, signed a remonstrance against the ordination of Mr. Howe, solely from apprehensions respecting exchanges, and laid it before the council on the day appointed for the ordination."

We shall soon see whether this is a statement of facts as they really occurred. But we will proceed with the extract.

"Whereupon [upon the fears and statements of the remonstrants respecting exchanges] the pastor elect was freely and fully interrogated on that point by the council, and he gave such assurances of his willingness to exchange pulpits with each member of the council, and all neighboring ministers of regular standing of the Congregational order, that the remonstrants were satisfied and withdrew all objections. Mr. Howe was accordingly ordained."

"For several of the first years of his ministry, there was general harmony between pastor and flock—the fulfillment of the promise being satisfactorily observed. But as exclusiveness became more strictly enforced by its authors and abettors, Mr. Howe was compelled either to violate his promise, or lose fellowship with the friends of that system. He chose the former alternative. Upon this, his parishioners became dissatisfied, and communed with him," &c. "But he could not be prevailed with to return to his promised course in this matter. Whereupon a town meeting was held," and Mr. Howe, by vote, was excused from preaching. He and his friends "withdrew and formed a separate religious society. The town became thus divided."

It will be observed from these extracts, that Mr. Butler makes the following representations:—that the opposition to Mr. Howe's settlement arose altogether from the fear that he would not adopt a liberal system of exchanges; that the remonstrance against him had this solely in view; that it was upon the presentation of this remonstrance and the apprehensions it embodied concerning exchanges, that the council were led to question Mr. Howe upon the subject, and to exact a promise of liberality from him, before they could ordain him; that, accordingly, Mr. Howe did make such a promise, which satisfied the remonstrants,

and prepared the way for the *liberal* men on the council to proceed to ordination; that after a few years Mr. Howe was induced to break his promise, and "thus" he divided the town, and the sad consequences followed, which Mr. Butler had already detailed in like instances. All this is charged upon Mr. Howe, thus represented as a *perfidious man and minister of Christ*, which is rather too serious a matter to pass unnoticed, *if not true.* We trust we shall satisfy the candid, impartial public of the entire erroneousness of all these representations.

That we may present this matter in a clear light before the public mind, our inquiries upon these several points will come up in the following order:—Did the town, or even the remonstrants, attempt any such precautions respecting exchanges, as Mr. Butler represents? Did Mr. Howe make a promise or pledge himself in any way to the town, or to any body of men, before his ordination, that he would exchange with any class of ministers, *liberal* or *orthodox?* And even if it could be shown that he did make such a promise, can he be proved guilty of ever breaking that promise, or even of neglecting it, by the proper application of the rules of ministerial courtesy?

Turning our attention to the first point of inquiry, does it appear that the town, as a precautionary measure, at the time of Mr. Howe's settlement, exacted the alleged promise, or that the seventy-nine remonstrants opposed his settlement "*solely from apprehensions respecting exchanges?*" We reply, it does not, but the contrary. There is good and satisfactory evidence, that this question of exchanges never had its origin among the people of this town; it sprung up wholly independent of them, *in the ordaining council.* Not the least evidence appears from all the documents in relation to Mr. Howe's call and settlement, nor from the subsequent transactions of the town, touching Mr. Howe's connection with it, nor from any of the communications now extant, which passed between him and the disaffected among his people subsequently on

the subject of exchanges, to show that the people ever thought of this matter, until it was suggested to their minds by certain men on the council, styling themselves "liberal." The people of this place are wholly indebted to "the liberal minded" part of that council for this "*bone of contention.*" We have searched in vain for the first proof that the people started this question. We have looked through all the recorded transactions of the town concerning Mr. Howe's call and settlement, and the subsequent action of the town, while an opposing class of men were *agitating*, *agitating*, *agitating*, until they finally revolutionized the primitive religious order of the town. This order of men, at one time, had an article inserted in a warrant for a town meeting, 'To see if Mr. Howe had complied with the terms of his engagement with the town, or fulfilled the reasonable expectations at the time of his settlement,'—or something to this import, but the town at once *dismissed the article.* There was not a shadow to support such an imputation. Mr. Howe, in his answer to the people's invitation, makes not the faintest allusion to any such agreement or expectation concerning exchanges.

The famous remonstrance of the seventy-nine, of which so much account has been made of late, and which Mr. Butler affirms was got up "*solely from apprehensions respecting exchanges,*" and which was withdrawn with so much satisfaction, when, as he affirms, Mr. Howe made his "promise," it appears was not handed in to the council till *after* the usual examination of the candidate, and *this whole matter of exchanges had been disposed of there.* And when it was presented, at that late hour, to the great surprise of the council, as they were about to assign the parts for the public service, there is no evidence that it made the slightest allusion *to the subject of exchanges,* but its ill-timed objections to the ordination were based wholly upon other considerations. We have inquired for this important document, but our search has been in vain;

we presume it is not in existence. We have been particularly desirous to find it, for we are confident it would maintain a saddening silence about Mr. Howe's pulpit exchanges or any 'fears respecting them.' We should like to print it, with *all the names*, the *manner*, and the *time* of their being obtained. All the *incidents* might be matters of interest. Mr. Butler declares them to have been "*legal voters*," and we are aware that he is a lawyer. But if it were "pertinent," we might ask him, whether young men, fresh from another State, are "*legal voters*" in this? Such, at least, was one of the seventy-nine. This is a matter of *certainty*. One of the men, whose zeal to procure "signers" kept his eyes waking some nights previous to the ordination, chanced, that year, to be both constable and collector, and one of his arguments to persuade men was, "If you will not sign, *I will distress you for those rates*." The widow is now living, who says she heard that man offer this threat, as an argument, to induce her own husband to sign said remonstrance. Now, how much importance ought to be attached to a document of this character, got up in this way? We leave it for wise men to judge. We must say, Mr. Butler evinces a surprising readiness to avail himself of all such helps, while he is as surprisingly unsuccessful in finding counter testimony. The following is an instance. The friends of the established order of the town, and of Mr. Howe, learning only at a *late hour*, the day before the ordination, the designs of the opposers, so secret had they been in their operations, got up a counter petition in favor of Mr. Howe's ordination, and secured to it, in the few hours left them, one hundred and forty-four names of "legal voters" in the town, which paper was lodged in the hands of the church committee, and when the remonstrance was handed in to the council, this petition was put in, to counteract its influence. This important fact entirely escaped Mr. Butler's notice.

That this *late hour* was the time of presenting these

papers, and that the examination, and all questioning of the candidate for ordination had closed previously, appears from a variety of evidence. So far as any thing can be learned from the minutes of the council, attested by the scribe, they favor this view of the subject. The scribe of an ecclesiastical council, if he is well instructed in his duty, notes things in the order in which they occur in council. In this document the usual order of examination, even to Mr. Howe's views of religious doctrine, is minuted. Then, it is said, "Several questions were proposed to the candidate." As this is all the *questioning* of the candidate mentioned, we are left to infer, that the questioning respecting indiscriminate exchanges was herein embraced, especially as the testimony, yet to be introduced, confirms this view. The minutes then notice both the papers, already described, and say, "After due deliberation, it was voted, that these papers be placed in the hands of those who presented them respectively." What this "deliberation" was, may hereafter appear. "It was then unanimously voted, that —the council are ready to proceed to ordination."

The Rev. George Fisher, of Harvard, who was on the council says:

"I am sure, that the remonstrance against Mr. Howe's settlement was not presented till the council had nearly or quite completed their business. Mr. Howe was not questioned about exchanges or any thing else after the remonstrance was presented. Drs. Ripley and Abbot seemed surprised and sorry at its being presented, and went out to confer with the committee of the remonstrants and to settle the matter with them."

This, doubtless, was the "deliberation" referred to in the records of the scribe. It seems the council were just ready to close up their business, and enter upon the public services of the occasion, when this obstacle of a remonstrance, or "monster," as its authors then styled it, was thrown in their way. It was soon removed, however, by the influence of a counter petition, containing nearly twice as many names, and by the moderator's

withdrawing, in connection with his liberal friend, and conferring with the remonstrants upon the propriety of their taking back their paper. What arguments they used, or what *promises* THEY *made*, we are left to conjecture. We know that the said paper went, whence it came, and we see, too, that Mr. Butler is wrong in saying, that, upon the presentation of this paper, and its subject matter, Mr. Howe "was freely and fully interrogated" about exchanges "by the council," and that upon his giving certain "assurances," "the remonstrants were satisfied, and withdrew all objections."

Mr. Breck, before quoted, and who acted as committee of the church before the council, states his views as follows:

"I have read, with deep attention, the history of" &c.—"I am grieved to find some things recorded in this book, which must go down to posterity, not exactly in accordance with facts, according to my understanding of the matter. I refer to that portion of it in particular, relating to the settlement of Rev. Mr. Howe. On page 322, Mr. Howe is accused of violating his 'promise,' and other statements are made, which do not agree with my understanding of the matter. I was present before the council, as one of the committee from the church, and was a minute observer of all that was said and done. I feel it my duty to give my testimony in the case, not only in reference to the character of my deceased friend, Mr. Howe, but a duty I owe to his family, the church, and the public at large. What I say now, I shall be willing to say upon my solemn oath, *if necessary.*

"I remember distinctly the remonstrance, signed by seventy-nine, against the ordination, and I remember, too, the petition signed by one hundred and forty or more, of the inhabitants of Pepperell, that the ordination might take place, which Mr. Butler seems to have forgotten, in his history of the transaction. I presented this petition myself. In the first place, I wish to say a few words in reference to this remonstrance. Mr. Butler says, 'In order to prevent all misunderstanding on that point, some of the legal voters, to the number of seventy-nine, signed a remonstrance against the ordination, *solely from apprehensions respecting exchanges*, and laid it before the council,' &c. Now the remonstrance said nothing about exchanges, or any fear respecting them. What there might have been in the minds of the remonstrants, of course, I cannot say. The main point in the remonstrance, according to my remembrance, was, that the sense of the town was not fully taken at the town meeting, at the time they voted to give Mr. Howe a call, as not one-half of the voters were out. The remonstrants stated, that a majority of the town were opposed to the settlement of Mr. Howe, and this would appear to the council, when the doings of the town meeting were read, as the vote stood a little over seventy for Mr. Howe, and twenty against or thereabouts, whereas

there were seventy-nine who remonstrated. But when the petition, signed by more than one hundred and forty, was presented, the council were put right on this point. Mr. Howe had been examined, and questioned, *in every particular, previous* to the presentation of the remonstrance and the petition."

Thus we see, that the testimony of this responsible witness, whose character, we trust, no man will attempt to impeach, and who was present and witnessed all the doings of the council, as church committee, is in open conflict with Mr. Butler's statements.

At the State Fast, either in the Spring of 1830 or 1831, probably the latter, while his difficulties with the town were pending, as his opposers were then attempting to make account of the infrequency of his exchanges with Unitarians, Mr. Howe preached a sermon to his people upon the merits of the controversy between "liberal Christians," so called, and evangelical Christians. In the latter part of this discourse, he explaines his own position on this subject, and corrects false impressions which might have been made respecting it. Alluding to this same point we are now considering, he says,—"The terms, 'engagement and agreement,' are used, as existing between the town and me on this subject," [of exchanges]. "But the proposals of this town were made to me without reference to this subject; they were accepted without reference to this subject. *The signatures, both for and against my ordination, were obtained without reference to it, and both presented to the council after the question of exchanges was dismissed.* I am not aware, that I ever exchanged a word, or that one word ever passed between me and any individual of the town on the subject of exchanges, before my ordination." Now, who can doubt that this is a true statement of the facts, as they existed? Would Mr. Howe have stood up before the town, represented in that congregation, and made statements which a score of men before him could and would have contradicted to his face, if they had known him to be falsifying?

Would he have thus put a weapon into the hands of his active enemies, with which he must have known they could slay him? Let him believe this, who never knew Mr. Howe better, than to be capable of thus wounding himself.

In order to show where this perplexing question about exchanges originated, and who was responsible for it, we extract the following from this same sermon. "The evening before my ordination, in a conversation with Drs. Abbot and Ripley, [both of the liberal party,] members of the council, among other things, it was remarked, that I should probably be questioned in the council on the subject of exchanges." Mr. Howe objected, that he could not answer such questions "without implying a pledge, which would deprive [him] of customary rights. They freely admitted it, and to avoid it, [this difficulty,] *devised these methods*," &c. We shall quote further, hereafter, from this interesting passage, for another purpose. Thus it is perfectly evident, what class of men originated this vexed question,—that the people of this town can have no credit at all for originality in this matter, however much has been attributed to a certain class of them.

Certain witnesses from the council, called to testify in behalf of "The church of the First Parish, in Pepperell" —Unitarian—affirm as follows. We quote only as relates to the point under consideration. Rev. Mr. Damon, scribe, says, "Mr. Howe was questioned *in council*, to this effect, *perhaps* in these very words." No suggestion is here, that the question of exchanges was urged upon the council by the people, or any portion of them. To this he could not testify. The next witness is Rev. Dr. Thayer of Lancaster. What does he say? "At the ordination of Mr. Howe, and knowing that he had received his theological education under direction of those who patronized the "exclusive" course, *I* proposed to him a question of this

import; May the liberal ministers rely on your exchanging with them?" Mr. Howe's answer was so satisfactory to him, he testifies, "that *I voted for his ordination*"!—plainly indicating, that he should not have shown Mr. Howe this favor, but for the return favor of an exchange! It was Dr. Thayer's knowledge of *whence Mr. Howe came*, then, rather than his knowledge of *any fears of the people*, that prompted his inquiries. There is one more witness still of this class. He uses some *French* in his haste; but still, abating this from his testimony, we can understand it. He says,—"After the usual examination preparatory to ordination, *Dr. Thayer and Mr. Damon* said there was yet one point on which *they* wished to question the candidate, and hoped to receive a clear and explicit reply, —*that was as to his future course of exchanges.*" Thus it was Dr. T., Mr. D., and others of the "*liberal party*," on the council, *and not the people*, who concerned themselves with that, which belonged solely to Mr. Howe. Dr. Ripley gives some "*impressions*" upon this subject, but his recollection does not seem to be distinct. These, however, had evidently received a *liberal coloring*, since he was concerned with another liberal friend in introducing this improper question, and in devising a plan whereby Mr. Howe might pass over the troublesome subject to their satisfaction, and still keep himself clear from the hamper of a *pledge*, which they professed not to desire to saddle upon him.*

That there was no engagement of the kind in question,

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* For these several items of testimony, see the Report of a committee in 1837, "At a special meeting of the First [Unitarian] Church of Christ in Pepperell, held at the house of Deacon John Walton,—chosen and instructed to examine the Records of the church, with a view to correct any misstatements," &c. This report, it seems, is appended to the second volume of the Church Records, as required "*Corrigenda et addenda.*" This new order, by a *special privilege of law*, in this State, it should be remembered, had come into possession of the Records of "The Church of Christ in Pepperell," and these Records, it seems, were not found adapted to their views and wants. This report, however, is an unjust reflection upon the fidelity of Mr. Howe, acting as clerk of the church. There is no doubt, that he recorded the transactions of the church, *as they occurred*, and that the Record gives a fair history of the times, *as far as it goes.*

with the town, or any part of the people, is further evident from this fact. In the year 1828, and onward, measures were entered upon by the same party that originally opposed Mr. Howe's settlement, looking evidently to a disruption of the union. To this effect, their most hopeful means seem to have been to agitate the question of exchanges. The town granted them a committee, to confer with Mr. Howe on the subject of exchanging with "liberal ministers;" but in the whole correspondence upon this subject, now extant, and in the hands of the committee, and in the report this committee made of their inquiries to the town, there is no allusion whatever to any such stipulation, condition, or even *expectation*, concerning exchanges. They reported, "*First, that Mr. Howe claims, as a right incident to his office, as pastor, the privilege of exercising his own discretion in relation to exchanges.*" There are two other points in this report—and they, with the above, constitute the whole report—which we shall make use of in another place. This "right," claimed by Mr. Howe, this committee did not attempt to controvert; neither do they hint at any circumstance to disparage this right. Would they not have done it, at that time, if they knew of any thing of this kind? Of this committee, James Lewis, Esq., was chairman. With him were associated four others, three of whom never disguised their strong opposition to Mr. Howe.*

Thus it is clear, to a demonstration, that the town neither exacted, nor thought of any such promise, when Mr. Howe was invited to become its minister;—that "the remonstrance of the seventy-nine" made no allusion to it, but was based upon other grounds;—and that this requiring of "*assurances*," as to a particular course of ministerial exchanges, as a preliminary to ordination—a thing unheard of among evangelical ministers—originated with the so called "liberal men" on the council. Some, styling

* See Town Records, Vol. IV. p. 257.

themselves "liberal," originated the question in secret conclave; "other such," in the council, held up before the youthful candidate, *in terrorem*, the bug-bear, that they might not proceed to ordain him, unless he would commit himself to their notions of things. But he was not intimidated, as we shall see, by this implied threat. He had nothing to fear, as there was a decided majority of Orthodox men on the council, who regarded this meddlesome business as illiberal, discourteous, and out of place altogether. Besides, he knew that the religious part of the community *generally*, and a large majority of the town, "earnestly desired his ordination."

We come now to the second point of inquiry. Did Mr. Howe ever make a *promise*, or give any *pledge* to any party concerned, that he would exchange with "liberal clergymen," or even with any class of ministers? He never did, as is already evident, unless to his ordaining council. The "*liberal*" members, it seems, were extremely desirous of committing him to a specific course. Did they succeed in their endeavors? We shall see. Here we will first let Mr. Howe speak for himself, though his released spirit is now "where the wicked cease from troubling," rapt in more blissful service.

When the committee, granted to the disaffected by the town, to confer with him on the subject of exchanges, were to report, May 5, 1828, Mr. Howe, as it appears, prepared himself with notes to guide his remarks, and went before the town, to explain his principles and his course on the subject of exchanges. These notes we have in his own hand-writing. He had then been between five and six years minister of the place. In these notes he says,—"I have had no intention, under the present circumstances of the town, to be exclusive in my exchanges. I have, as yet, declined no one. I know not that I shall decline any one. *Yet, you will understand that it is my*

privilege to do it, if, in the exercise of my discretion, I think proper so to do." Thus we see, that Mr. Howe regarded an indiscriminate course of exchanges with Congregational ministers, a *concession* on his part, rather than a matter of *obligation.* He proceeds thus. "That part of the council, at my ordination, who differed from me in sentiment, wished to be satisfied that I should not be exclusive in my exchanges, on the ground of difference of sentiment. They were satisfied that I should not. *But all of you who were present in that council, will recollect that I distinctly said to the council, I do not ask you to ordain me on condition that I shall not enjoy the same privileges which you all enjoy;* NEITHER CAN I HERE GIVE A PLEDGE, *which will allow my people to say, if hereafter I see fit to decline any individual,* THAT I HAD FORFEITED MY PLEDGE. *'No, no; we do not expect it,' was the immediate reply,*" from the *liberal party.*

It does not appear that the council generally, not even the "liberal" part of it, required of Mr. Howe a *promise,* or *pledge,* to indiscriminate ministerial intercourse; yet, there were a few, as we have already seen, and shall see, whose zeal for their cause got the better of their discretion and liberality, and led them to push this matter quite strenuously. As further explanatory of this whole matter, Mr. Howe says in his Fast sermon, already referred to,—

"The evening before my ordination, in a conversation with Drs. Abbot and Ripley, members of the council, among other things, it was remarked that I should probably be questioned in the council on the subject of exchanges. I replied that I should be happy to exchange with *them, but as I was acquainted with no others of the liberal party,* it would be improper for me to speak decisively respecting them; also it would be difficult for me to answer such questions in the council, without implying a *pledge,* which would deprive me of customary rights. They freely admitted it, and to avoid it, [even the *implying* of a *pledge* or *promise,*] *devised these methods,* that I might reply to the question when asked, *that I should be willing to exchange with the members of the council,* AS FAR AS I WAS ACQUAINTED WITH THEM. Or, that I might name three or four of the council, and include them, [Drs. Abbot and Ripley—liberal men,] among the number with whom I should be happy to exchange. I gave these answers in substance, and the member who put them was satisfied. The scribe of the council, not being aware of

my unwillingness to give a pledge, *pressed the question further.* This led to further remarks, which drew from me the declaration, I do not ask this council to ordain me on condition that I shall not enjoy the same rights which you all enjoy. *Neither can I here give a pledge, which will allow my people to say, if hereafter I see fit to decline any individual, I had forfeited my pledge.*"

This narration explains the whole matter of the origin and the nature of what passed in the council on the subject of exchanges. It shows, that there was no promise or pledge of any kind concerning exchanges given. Mr. Howe positively declined committing himself, and in order to avoid it, he followed the course which his *liberal friends devised for him*, and only expressed, as they desired, his willingness to exchange with those whose sentiments he thought he understood; namely, Drs. Abbot and Ripley, whom, he says afterwards, as we shall presently see, he understood "to hold the doctrine of the Atonement, and other important doctrines, since discarded from the liberal system." We know that ridicule has been copiously poured upon this explanation, as though here was a distinction without a difference. Now if this be an artifice, it was devised by the "liberal party." We allow others to judge. But we envy not that man's perspicuity and power of discrimination, who can discern no difference between a man's saying, *with his present views and knowledge*, he is *willing* to pursue a certain prescribed course *at the present time*, and his saying that he positively *promises* or *pledges* himself to pursue that course for an indefinite future. In the first instance, should he for a reason satisfactory to himself, cease at any time to follow in that course, would he violate any promise? The case is so plain, it needs no answer, nor any illustration; and that man's metaphysics must be of a peculiar cast, who confounds these two cases. Common men see the difference, and practise upon it in the daily business of life.

To confirm Mr. Howe's own statements upon this point, we here introduce the following certificates, obtained by him from members of the council, while his difficulties

with the town were pending. He secured them, to refute the charge of breaking an alleged promise, made to the council, which the opposition then were charging against him. We copy from the original manuscripts.

Tyngsboro', *April* 23, 1830.

Rev. James Howe,

As a member of the ecclesiastical council, assembled at Pepperell, for your ordination, I do this moment recollect your prudent refusal to give a pledge for future indiscriminate exchanges, and that you reserved to yourself the liberty and privileges, which ministers claim and have a right to enjoy, and I do think, that without any liability to censure, you have a full right to exchange when, and with whom you please.

From your friend and brother in the gospel,

Nathaniel Lawrence.

This may certify whom it may concern,—That the Rev. James Howe, when examined by the council convened for his ordination, answered the questions relative to exchanges with ministers in regular standing, that he did not wish to entangle himself by any pledge; but claimed the right, which the gentlemen of the council exercised, of judging concerning expediency and propriety.

David Palmer.

Townsend, *April* 28, 1830.

Rev. James Howe,

Dear Sir:—I was a member of the council, at your ordination, and distinctly recollect, that you gave no pledge on the subject of ministerial exchanges; though you observed that your views were such, that you should then have no objections to exchange with those members of the council *with whom you were acquainted.* You insisted on enjoying the same privilege with your brethren in the ministry, viz., to regulate your exchanges according to your own discretion and sense of duty. Yours, &c.

John M. Putnam.

Ashby, *June* 19, 1830.

The following is from Rev. Mr. Smith, of Hollis. It is without date, but it was doubtless procured at the same time with the others.

Whom it may concern,—I certify, that having been one of the council to ordain Rev. James Howe, of Pepperell, I well remember, that although he did consent to exchange with those members of the council *with whom he was acquainted*, yet he refused to pledge himself to exchange indiscriminately with ministers, but reserved the right to determine his own exchanges, as duty should require. To this the council gave full consent, and said they would do the same.

Eli Smith.

Milford, May 1, 1830.

I was a member of the council, at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Howe, of Pepperell. I recollect when he was *pressed* by some of the council, respecting his exchanging with clergymen of liberal sentiments, that he did not consent to *pledge* himself to comply with their wishes, but claimed the same privilege with his brethren in the ministry, in respect to exchanges.

HUMPHREY MOORE.

Harvard, April 29, 1830.

BROTHER HOWE,—In relation to what occurred before your ordaining council on the subject of exchanges,—you distinctly said, that while you did not know that you should object to exchanging with the members of the council, *so far as you was then acquainted with them*, yet you could not give any pledge respecting exchanges, which would deprive you of the control over your pulpit, claimed and enjoyed by other ministers. Yours affectionately,

GEORGE FISHER.

The above certificates, which so clearly and unitedly exculpate the late pastor of this church from the unrighteous charge of PERFIDY, published against him recently by his enemies, were happily discovered among his papers after the publication of these calumnies. They seem to have been providentially preserved, to redress a most flagrant wrong done to his good name. They confirm his own account of this matter, and "*lift his head up above his enemies round about.*"

It may be well to add to the above certificates, the following, obtained by a member of the committee.

South Merrimack, March 8, 1848.

Having been a member of the council, at the ordination of Rev. James Howe, in Pepperell, and having read the certificates obtained from members of that council by Mr. Howe, showing that he gave no pledge to the council, as to his future ministerial exchanges, I can certify that what is contained in them to this effect is true.

SAMUEL H. TOLMAN.

Here then are seven clergymen, who were upon that council, and witnessed all that passed, and every one declares that, when Mr. Howe was questioned upon his intended course of exchanges, he refused all *promises and pledges*, and reserved his proper rights in common with his brethren. He was willing to acknowledge, and did

unhesitatingly, as some of these witnesses certify, express *the liberality of his feelings*, but he could not be enticed, nor drawn, nor frightened any further.

We have one other item of testimony, which will complete our proof upon the present point. It is from Joseph Breck, Esq., merchant, of Boston, then a member of this church, and acting as committee in its behalf before the ordaining council, as before stated. He says:

"I was present before the council, as one of the committee from the church, and was a minute observer of all that was said and done.—— There came up a discussion upon exchanges, which occupied some time, and I began to think the ordination would not take place, as Mr. Howe *would not give a pledge*, to exchange with all the members of the council convened, but would only signify his willingness to exchange with such men as Drs. Abbot and Ripley, as he then understood their sentiments. This was all the council could draw from him, by way of *promise or pledge*, notwithstanding they brought all their force against him, for a long time. It appeared to me, at the time, that the liberals were very *illiberal*, in bearing down so long and hard, as they did upon Mr. Howe. Rather than *pledge himself*, Mr. Howe preferred that the ordination should not take place."

Do not these various items of testimony make sufficiently clear this whole matter? There is a substantial agreement between them all, from beginning to end. They discover a natural desire and course of procedure on the part of a youthful candidate for the solemn office of a Christian minister, in the trying circumstances in which Mr. Howe was placed, when about to enter upon his work among a people divided in religious sentiment. He was always a man of truly liberal feeling. He "unequivocally," as he confesses, expressed this liberality of feeling before his ordaining council. He wished to advance, as a Christian, and a minister, in the matter of conciliation and courtesy, as far as a good conscience, and the fear of God would permit. This he appears ever to have done, both before the council, and in his subsequent course. Yet, while some few on that council, styling themselves, "liberal ministers," did a thing which they ought to have blushed ever to mention;—that is, tried

to extort as a condition of ordination, a *vow* from him, that he would exchange with them, and those like them, during his future ministry—for how else could he become "A PROMISE-BREAKER?"—still he seems to have stood firm for his conceded rights and privileges; and he declared to them, that he would rather forego their official services, than grant their desire.

From these papers, furnishing this testimony, it appears still further evident, that this question of pledging to indiscriminate exchanges, originated not with the people of this town, but with some of "*the liberal ministers*" on that council;—that when Mr. Howe objected to answering such questions, as it was stated to him would probably be put to him, because he would be likely to be misunderstood, and be thought to commit himself to a certain course of ministerial exchanges before his people, *they themselves* devised the plan for him to satisfy them, and still save himself. As a trusting youth, under the influence of much older advisers, he gave the answers they put into his mouth. This satisfied them, but not some of the "liberal party," who were not in the secret of the plan devised by the liberal doctors. These others pushed him hard for a pledge to fellowship with Unitarians, or what would have amounted to the same, which thing they are now endeavoring to prove that he did do. This pushing of the question, drew from Mr. Howe the frank declaration, that rather than pledge himself to any such course, he should choose that the council would not ordain him.

And now, in view of all the evidence here disclosed as to the origin and responsibility of this vexed question, an instrument, it seems, constructed by "liberal ministers," by "liberal-minded men" employed in goading Mr. Howe, while living, that they might render his post an insufferable one, and with which "liberal men" have well nigh torn open his tomb, that they might enter and charge him

with perfidy, what shall we say of the following Note, penned by our historic author, and inserted at the bottom of his 322 page?

"Whether or not Mr. Howe adopted the least objectionable course, in the 'strait betwixt two,' into which he was driven, will, in men's judgment probably be decided differently; by some in the affirmative, by others in the negative, according to their different estimation of justice and expediency. But either course would, in the minds of all honest, honorable, upright men and Christians, have been preferable to *the mean and contemptible position in which his friends (if friends they can be called) have, since his death, endeavored to place him. In order to evade the reproach of being a* PROMISE-BREAKER, *they have represented him as making a promise which he knew would be understood according to its express terms, in one manner, and by a secret, non-committal, mental evasion, reserving to himself the right to interpret it in another manner.* See Rev. D. Andrews's Centennial Discourse, Note H."

Upon this characteristic Note, we offer no comments. We leave others to imagine how Mr. Butler could stain so calm, so pure, and so dignified a subject as History, with a passage breathing such a spirit, and containing such ungracious epithets, as are here applied to some of the most reputable elders in the ministry of his own neighborhood. Candid, discerning and unprejudiced men have read the Note referred to, as the ground of what Mr. Butler affirms, and say they cannot make out even the slightest justification for such a serious charge as he has brought against worthy clergymen, who testify in that Note, as follows: that 'Mr. Howe expressed willingness to exchange with his ordaining council, *as far as he was acquainted with them*, but declined committing himself.' Another one says, twenty-five years after the event, 'according to my *best recollection*, Mr. Howe was willing to exchange with the regular clergy of that region, but *I did not understand that he promised to exchange with Unitarians*, and if he refused to do it, I do not think he violated *truth or good faith*.' We have given the entire substance of the representations

made in Note H, by those three "*friends of Mr. Howe, if friends they can be called,*" to testify such things of him, as that he did not *promise to exchange with Unitarians!* And here is all the support that Mr. Butler had, to found his strange assertions upon from that reference. We may here say, that when these clergymen were asked to testify for Mr. Howe, as in that Note, it was not known that the *original* certificates, already quoted, were extant. They were secured by Mr. Howe only a few years after the occasion to which they refer, when the remembrance of what then passed was fresh in the minds of the witnesses.

With regard to this matter of exchanges, one more point remains to be considered, namely:—Suppose it could be shown, that Mr. Howe did commit himself to indiscriminate exchanges, before his ordination; was his subsequent course such, as, *by the proper application of the rules of ministerial courtesy*, to expose him to the charge of "promise-breaker?" We think it is evident it was not. No proof has reached our minds yet, to show the contrary of this conclusion. The rules of ministerial etiquette are understood to require *reciprocal* invitations for an interchange of pulpit service. And, moreover, it is thought to belong not to the youthful stranger, but to his older neighbors in the ministry, to make the first advances for this exchange of service. Now, what was Mr. Howe's course, and the course of "liberal ministers" with him? We shall first let him, though dead, speak for himself. In his notes of remarks made in town-meeting, doubtless May 5, 1828, as in these notes he speaks of then having been five years in the ministry, and refers to the article in the town-warrant at that time on the subject of "liberal exchanges," as the occasion of his remarks, he says:—"What has been my practice? In little more than a year

from the time of my ordination, I, myself, applied to each and every member of the council, nearly in the order of their age, and with each and every member I exchanged. On a review of my exchanges, I obtain the following facts. I have made to that part of the council who differed from me in sentiment, *five times*—or nearer that number, than any other—as many applications for exchanges *as I have received.* I have declined no one." Of the wisdom or expediency of such a course, good men will form their own opinions. But it seems that during the first five years of Mr. Howe's ministry, the "liberal clergy" of this region left *five-sixths* of the work of applying for an interchange of service, for Mr. Howe to perform! Surely this was not very *liberal* nor courteous. This does not evince a very strong desire to practise upon the principle they were so anxious to establish at the time of the ordination. Will some one insinuate,—"Perhaps Mr. Howe was obtrusive in the *frequency* of his applications to *liberal* gentlemen?" Why then were the "liberal party" at home, at this very time, complaining of the *infrequency* of his exchanges with this very class of men?

The article in the town-warrant, already referred to, was as follows: "To see if the town will choose a committee to confer with Rev. James Howe relative to his exchanging with all the neighboring ministers, of good standing, and who are termed liberal." Of the committee, chosen pursuant to this article, James Lewis, Esq., was chairman. The first point in their report we have already given. We now put into our argument the remaining two, to show how this *liberal committee*, opposed to Mr. Howe, understood this subject at that time. They reported,—"2d. *That the course adopted by him* [Mr. Howe] *is not exclusive; but he feels himself at liberty, and is ready, to exchange with both classes of the clergy.* 3d. *That although it is a fact, that the exchanges, for*

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some considerable time past, have been almost entirely with the Orthodox, Mr. Howe has, in one or more instances, made application for an exchange with Unitarian ministers, which it was not convenient for them, at the time, to accept; and that he has, in NO INSTANCE, REFUSED AN APPLICATION FROM THEM."*

It seems perfectly evident, then, that Mr. Howe's feelings were sufficiently liberal up to this point, and as evident, that there was no very ardent desire felt on the part of liberal clergymen for this kind of interchange of service. How was it two or three years later, or near the time when things in the place were approaching a crisis? In his Fast Sermon, preached at that time, Mr. Howe says to the people of the town,—"My course, during the first five years of my ministry, has been fully explained to you on a former occasion. All I need to say in regard to it now is, that *it is precisely a continuation of the same course.*" And again he says,—"I never have *declined* them, [liberal clergymen,] nor *omitted any thing which propriety required respecting exchanges.*" We see, then, that up to this late period in the controversy, Mr. Howe felt that, if there was a fault any where in relation to these exchanges, it was not on his part. Further to elucidate this point, we quote once more from Mr. Breck. "After Mr. Howe was settled, he did exchange with Unitarians, more or less. But it appeared that they were more afraid of his *Orthodoxy*, than he was of their *Unitarianism.* I will state one fact in relation to this matter. After the ordination, some time, Mr. Howe exchanged with Dr. Thayer, of Lancaster, by request of Mr. Howe. It was then for Dr. Thayer to make the next proposition, *which was never done.* Mr. Howe was the last man Dr. Thayer wished to have in his pulpit." And yet this was the very man who professed such solicitude for exchanges at the

* Town Records, Vol. IV. p. 257.

time of the ordination, and whose vote on the question of ordaining, or not ordaining, turned upon the very small point of Mr. Howe's answer to this, his question,—"May the liberal ministers, as they are called, rely on your holding intercourse with them in the way of exchanges?" It would seem that no one, of the least discernment, need mistake, why all this show of solicitude and liberality concerning ministerial intercourse was paraded. Was not capital needed with which to gain the people over to a lax theology? And was not this thought to be the most feasible method of making it? We leave it for those conversant with "liberal movements" to judge.

Now having fully shown Mr. Howe's continued liberality in the matter of free exchanges, we ought, in justice to the principles which guided his practice, to allow him to explain for himself. He says, in his Fast Sermon, as explanatory of his liberal course, "My opinions of the clergy of that party were formed principally from the gentlemen above alluded to, [Drs. Abbot and Ripley.] They were understood, at that time, to hold the doctrine of *the atonement*, and other important doctrines, which are now discarded from the liberal system. I could conscientiously exchange with such men then, *and can now.* There has been no alteration in my views on that subject. I presumed favorably with regard to the other members of the council, and exchanged with them; I never have declined them," &c.

But though he never declined their applications, because he never was much troubled with them, yet it should be stated, that about this time, he began to cease *soliciting* these favors. This he might before have done in obedience to the rules of ministerial courtesy. But it seems he was not a stickler for these rules; he obeyed, we trust, the higher dictates of conscience and duty. He says, in that important sermon, so frequently quoted; "I am free to declare, that the developments which have been made

respecting the doctrinal views of the liberal party, have truly astonished and grieved me. If we may take their own language as evidence, we are warranted in saying, that their most distinguished writers *avow the prominent tenet of Universalism;* they reject the Epistle to the Hebrews, and entertain such views of inspiration generally, as virtually to destroy the divine authority of the Scripture revelation. I will frankly declare, that I cannot conscientiously exchange with men of such sentiments, nor does my engagement with you require it, nor duty permit it; and I will indulge the hope, that few, if any of you, would wish it. You believe the Bible, the *whole* Bible, and you desire that it may be preached to you, plainly and faithfully, that you may be built up in the faith and holiness of the gospel; and I am ready to make any sacrifice in my power for your union and peace, for your present and future good."

We have now disposed of the three points which we proposed to make subjects of inquiry in relation to what Mr. Butler so unhesitatingly charges against Mr. Howe. We leave this part of our assigned task to the judgment of all the candid, the impartial and the good, in whatever sect or station found. Possessed of an unbiassed mind, we ask them to examine and decide whether they can now believe, that the dishonored and aspersed dead, ever laid himself under any such obligations to his people, as a condition of his settlement, or to those called to instate him in office, as a preliminary to their discharging that duty, as have been so boldly charged to him. We ask them to say whether, in all charity, Mr. Howe was not liberal enough; whether he did not sufficiently observe all rules of propriety, and of ministerial courtesy, *even viewing him under such obligations,* to escape the defaming charge of perfidy, after he has passed, lamented, to his grave, and can no longer defend himself? Are his

enemies justified in going, "with malice prepense," to his grave, and chiseling, as it were, upon the marble that gratitude and love have placed over it, "PROMISE-BREAKER"? *We speak as to wise men; judge ye.*

We now pass to other matters in this singular chapter of history. It seems Mr. Howe could not satisfy the liberal party, even by all the concessions he made, and the liberality he showed. For some reason, it seems, he was obliged to make much the greater share of applications for that species of ministerial interchange of service continually demanded of him. This fact, together with another fact, that Unitarianism was gradually becoming more and more developed, as another gospel, than that which the fathers of this church received, and than which it appears Mr. Howe understood it to be, when he felt that he could fraternize it to some little extent, probably accounted for the growing infrequency of the required exchanges, till the long pursued end,—*the ascendency of the "liberal party,"*—was consummated in May, 1831, by their carrying, in a small majority, a vote in town-meeting, couched in these terms;—"VOTED, *To excuse Rev. James Howe from preaching six Sabbaths in the course of the ensuing year, and permit the pulpit to be supplied on those Sabbaths by ministers of other denominations.*"

We feel called upon to correct a false impression, which may have been made, by the style in which Mr. Butler records this act, and the consequences proceeding from it. He says,—

"This movement, Mr. Howe and a minority of the town, including a large majority of the members of the church, chose to consider an expulsion from the pulpit. They therefore withdrew and formed a separate religious society. The town became thus divided into two parishes, with less trouble and contention than has happened in many other towns in the country."

There are a few things in this short extract worthy of notice. We think truth is deeply concerned in them. Let it be remembered, a historian is responsible for the

general impression he conveys, as well as for the language he uses. Now we think such language as this; "This movement, Mr. Howe and a *minority* of the town," &c., though there was, at the time, a mere *nominal* majority against him, is suited, we do not say designed, to make a false impression upon the uninformed, especially when taken in connection with the uniform manner in which Mr. Butler represents the balance of numbers and influence, as to the religious movements of the place. He suppresses all information as to the comparative size of the two congregations after the troubles and the division, upon which he is so careful to particularize in his peculiar way. He speaks of "*the good people generally*," as taking wise precautions to secure a liberal minister. He says upon Mr. Howe's choosing "to violate his promise," "*his parishioners became dissatisfied*," quite generally, the reader is led to suppose, as there is no intimation given to the contrary. There seems to be discoverable throughout, a willingness to allow the uninformed public to conclude that a mere faction adhered to the incumbent of the pastoral office, and supported him. He gives not the least intimation of the long trial of "the liberal party," of three years in continuance, to bring Mr. Howe and the town to their terms, or to separate him from the town. He hints not to the fact, that there were some six attempts made, before the end was accomplished; but leaves his reader to suppose the end was gained at the first trial, in a very easy, quiet way, with very little "trouble and contention." Justice, therefore, requires it should be known, that before the final act and the "expulsion from the pulpit," which rent the town, considered as a parish, there were some four several trials of strength on the subject of "liberal preaching," or some kindred topic, when the supporters of the hitherto established faith and order of the town had quite respectable majorities, and voted down the opposition to Mr. Howe

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from the new sect which had developed itself in town. And it should be further known, that when the final deed was done of ejecting the incumbent from his *lawful possession*, by calling to their aid persons who would by no means have appeared *natural* in God's house on his own day, their majority was only *sixteen.* The vast majority—some three to one—of those in town sufficiently interested to visit any house of worship for *religious* purposes, were always the friends and supporters of Mr. Howe; adhered to him in all the conflict he was called to pass through on account of his preaching the primitive and continued faith of this church; went with him to the new sanctuary erected for him to occupy; supported him till his death, and still wait on evangelical preaching.

There is another noticeable phrase in this short paragraph—"This movement, Mr. Howe and a minority *chose to consider an expulsion from the pulpit.*" Here we would ask even Mr. Butler himself—as he is a lawyer—how else "Mr. Howe and a minority" could consider it? Did not the laws of the State then, and do they not still, give a settled pastor the use and control of his pulpit, whenever he would use it for the religious instruction of his people, and especially on the Sabbath? Was not that vote of *excusing* the pastor, especially the subsequent execution of it, plainly a lawless and revolutionary act, although "the good people of Pepperell generally" were concerned in it? And did not the "liberal party" well understand, that they were in conflict with the law, as well as their minister's rights in these *excusatory* proceedings? Did not Mr. Howe fully acquaint them, that he considered the pulpit lawfully his, so long as his ministerial relation to the town continued, and that he felt it to be a solemn, sacred duty, to use it regularly, at the proper times, according to his solemn ordination vows? Here we insert the following correspondence.

Pepperell, May 31, 1830.

Rev. James Howe,

Dear Sir:—You are respectfully requested to inform the undersigned, a committee chosen by the liberal party to supply the pulpit in the meeting-house in said Pepperell, for six Sabbaths, whether you shall object to said committee's adopting measures to carry into full effect the votes of said town of Pepperell, which are copied below from the records of said town.

With great respect, your ob't servants,

John Walton,
Artemas Hemenway,
Luther Tarbell, Jr.

To the above, the following reply was made,

Pepperell, June 1, 1830.

To a Committee, chosen by the liberal party, to supply the pulpit six Sabbaths, in the meeting-house in said Pepperell.

Gentlemen:—In reply to your note of last eve, allow me respectfully to state, that from the best information I have been able to obtain on the subject, I have been led to the conclusion, that the laws of this Commonwealth, both civil and ecclesiastical, allow to me the sole right of supplying the pulpit while I am the minister of the town, the vote to which you have referred notwithstanding.

In this situation, with the kindest feelings towards yourselves, and those whom you represent, I have earnestly and prayerfully sought to know my duty. If the providence of God has placed me in the pulpit of this town, and given me the right of supplying it constantly according to my own discretion, can I consistently with my ordination vows, with fidelity to my divine Master, and the charge which he has committed to me, voluntarily relinquish that right, and leave the pulpit to be supplied at the discretion of individuals who avowedly differ widely from me in their views of truth and duty, and thus open a door to measures destructive of order and the best interests of the town? I dare not do it. It would be a still wider departure from duty, than the submitting of *exchanges* to the discretion of individuals. My views on that subject you have already sought and received, and communicated them without any abatement to the town.

You will, therefore, Gentlemen, distinctly understand, that I shall object to the supply of the pulpit, in pursuance of the votes to which you have referred, and shall feel compelled to regard any gentleman who shall occupy the pulpit without my consent, as disturbing or trespassing upon the rights secured to me by the laws of the Commonwealth. With the best wishes for the peace and welfare of the town, and your own happiness, I am, gentlemen,

Most respectfully, your ob't servant,

James Howe.

John Walton, Esq.
Artemas Hemenway.
Luther Tarbell, Jr.

Mr. Howe communicated a like expression of his views on this subject to a similar committee one year afterwards,

when this same measure of wresting from him the pulpit, while he was still the lawful minister of the town, was pushed even to the execution, and likewise to two "liberal clergymen," who came, at different times, at the invitation of "the liberal party," to obtrude into a pulpit not lawfully theirs.

And again, we would ask of Mr. Butler, in what possible way could Mr. Howe consider this movement less than expulsion, when Sabbath morning, May 22, 1831, on going to the church to discharge his usual duty, he found the door *sentinelled*, saw in the hand of the guard the ensign of his authority, and heard words like these,—"*You cannot enter here, to-day, Sir!*" We regret, sincerely, the necessity of referring to such strange and lawless proceedings in our own town, but justice to the character of the dead, of late most unrighteously assailed, demands the unwelcome service. None need dispute this fact, or doubt its truth, because the widow of that much injured man, then leaning upon his arm and witnessing the whole scene, is still living and testifies to its truth. The man who guarded the entrance to the church on that desecrated day, and uttered the repulsive words above, was soon, "by the grace of God," made an humble, penitent convert to the truth, and confessed to Mr. Howe his heartfelt sorrow for the part he was prompted and appointed to act on that memorable day. Mr. Howe had the unspeakable pleasure of receiving him, as "a brand plucked out of the fire," into Christian communion and fellowship, and of seeing him ardently devoted to the support of that "faith which he once destroyed." They both have since hopefully died "the death of the righteous," and doubtless now unite in the true and more perfect sanctuary above, in commemorating "the adorable grace," that alike saved each of them.

This paragraph is wisely fitted—we would not say intended—to give the reader the impression that the new

sect gained their triumph with very mild and honorable measures, while the way seems artfully prepared for the false inference that Mr. Howe and his friends were unreasonable almost beyond pardon. Let it be remembered, our historian has already made the following representations:—Mr. Howe was faithless to his promise, whereupon "his parishioners became dissatisfied, and communed with him in a friendly manner." He was unyielding, yea, obstinate; "he could not be prevailed with to return to his promised course." Next, the liberal party succeeded in passing and executing a very mild vote, just *excusing* him for a few Sabbaths from preaching—just long enough for a pleasant respite from the exhaustion of previous labors—"whereupon," says this paragraph, as though they were *expelled*, Mr. Howe and his friends "withdrew," and "the town became thus divided, *with less trouble and contention* than has happened in many other towns."

How easy it is to hang a beautiful surplice upon the angular joints and crooked limbs of an ugly man, and withal, to present to the unsuspecting beholder, quite a comely figure! We care not now to inquire what *excesses* may have been practised in these "many other towns in the country," in gaining possession of the old churches, funds, sacred furniture, &c., for new purposes. If the friends of the primitive faith and established order of this place experienced less of them than some of their *neighbors*, we trust they were duly grateful for their happy exemption. But how the *excusing* of the lawful incumbent from his proper office in the old church here was effected, we have already seen. Previous measures belong to the same category. Here we are unwillingly constrained to bring out to the light recorded measures attempted for the express purpose, it would seem, of starving the man "into capitulation," and of degrading the meeting-house, sacred to the worship of God and the exposition of his word, to some lower service than the office of 'bringing good

tidings of salvation and publishing peace;'—measures which it were desirable might forever have remained darkened by the covers of the town records;—but the enemies of a good man, a successful and approved minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, have compelled us to exonerate his name, so wantonly traduced, and to show that the fault was not all on his side and that of his friends. We quote from a town-warrant got up by "the liberal party," and acted upon in town-meeting, Sept. 20, 1830. "Art. 5. *To see if the town will direct the selectmen and town treasurer to withhold the money raised to pay Rev. James Howe's salary from him, after the expiration of his services for the present year, ending in October next;*" that is, after one month from that time.

"Art. 6. *To see if the town will sell the pews in the meeting-house, belonging to said town, for the benefit of the town;* OR MAKE ANY DIFFERENT APPROPRIATION OF THEM."*

To the honor of the town, the recorded disposition of these articles is "*Voted to pass over.—Voted to pass over.*"

These high-handed measures seem the more aggravated and unjustifiable, from the fact that they were wholly unprovoked by their designed victim. There was a straight and honorable course open before "the liberal party," either to convince and carry with them a majority, on the ground that the good of the town required their minister's dismission, or, if unable to do this, to withdraw, and like men, to assume the responsibility and expense of laying new foundations for themselves. Why, then, these unjustifiable measures? As has been before shown, Mr. Howe had sacredly fulfilled all his engagements to the town. We have yet to learn that any one complained, that he did not discharge faithfully all his pastoral and parochial duties. There seems to have been no complaint against him in any particular, save the one implied in an

* Town Records, Vol. IV. p. 303.

earnest attempt to prove him guilty of violating an obligation to exchange with Unitarians. In this, there was discouraging success. He triumphantly refuted the charge while living, and it was only renewed publicly when he had gone down to his grave; and it might have been supposed that the evidence of his innocence had perished with his mortal body. Happily it had not.

It is pertinent to remark here, that Mr. Howe never objected to having his connection with the town dissolved, if the people so desired, or whenever it should be made to appear that the good of the town required it. In a letter to the chairman of the liberal committee, dated May 19, 1831, he says: "Here permit me to remark, I became the minister of the town from a sense of duty. When it shall appear that the best interests of the town will be better promoted by the dissolution of the connection between us, I shall cheerfully relinquish a post which is held with so much solicitude." In a letter, dated June 23, 1831, to the Rev. Dr. Bancroft, invited by "the liberal party" to preach for them, when they had gained *the excusing* of their regular and lawful minister, after first repeating the substance of the letter to the liberal committee, already quoted, expressive of his duty and lawful rights, as he regarded them; and after saying, "You will perceive, then, that my consent to your supplying my pulpit to-morrow has not been obtained; and should you do it, you do it in violation of rights which I had been assured *you* respected;" he then says: "*I have never objected to a* REGULAR *course, to effect a dissolution of my connection with the town. I have supposed this to be the proper measure for 'the liberal party' to obtain the privileges they desire.* Allow me further to state, that there have been six several trials, to ascertain whether the town would permit the pulpit to be supplied by other ministers. In four, out of the six, there were considerable majorities against it. In two, there were small majorities in favor

of it. But the friends of Orthodoxy, unwilling to perpetuate contention, have thought it expedient to erect a house of worship for themselves; and, as soon as this can be completed, to leave the present one to be permanently enjoyed by their 'liberal' friends; and I had hoped that clergymen friendly to *order and law*, would forbear a little, to intrude upon the rights of another, until such a peaceful adjustment of our affairs. Most of all, am I unwilling to believe, that any one would occupy the pulpit of another, in violation of acknowledged rights, because he might hope to do it with impunity." But these latter considerations did not deter "liberal clergymen"—even such as Dr. Bancroft—from intruding upon "acknowledged rights."

An honest inquirer may be prompted to ask,—Why did not "the liberal party" meet the difficulty in their way on the ground suggested, which none can doubt was the true and honorable course to be pursued? Why did they not come up manly to the question, "Is it the pleasure of the town that Rev. J. Howe's ministerial connection with it should be longer continued?" He affirms he never objected to such an issue, and further, were the way clear, and would duty permit, he would "cheerfully relinquish a post retained with so much solicitude." But with better hopes of final success, it may be, it was thought fit to operate in another way. Were there not some minds that would not readily perceive, why a settled pastor should insist on the right, guarantied to him by the laws of the State, to control and supply his own pulpit so long as his ministerial connection continues? In his so doing, might they not begin to think their minister unkind and obstinate; and so, with their feelings chilled, though they could see no other fault, be prepared the better to be influenced by the cry of "illiberality and exclusiveness," when he was influenced only by an irresistible sense of duty? In those times, were not many gained over and

induced to act with the new sect in some such plausible way as this, who, otherwise, might have remained satisfied with the old evangelical order of Puritanism and primitive Christianity? In those times, the new order, seeking ascendency, seemed to have a morbid hankering after old meeting-houses, old puritanic communion plate, old church records, funds, and such like; and the most hopeful measures must be devised and prosecuted to gain these, because of their *attractive force.* Doubtless there were some slight influences of this kind—perhaps enough to change the balance—operating against Mr. Howe; when, if the proper issue had been made, at the proper time, the persons influenced thus might have acted in his favor. We know that several who were induced to operate against him, when the struggle about "liberal preaching" was pending, afterwards repented, and came back to sit under his ministry, and thankfully enjoyed it.

We now pass to notice a few other things in this ecclesiastical chapter, which would have been suffered to pass in silence, were it not for the previous necessity of correcting more important misrepresentations in this history, where character and truth are so deeply concerned. We had designed to notice Mr. Butler's seeming unfairness in devoting so much more of his attention to "liberal Christianity," and the justification of its ways, than to the main facts concerning evangelical religion in the place. An apparent example of this kind, is found on the 312 and 313 pages of his book. Here he first devotes a whole page to the refitting and dedication of the Unitarian meeting-house, and then proceeds to speak of the withdrawing of "a large number of the inhabitants,"—of their holding meetings elsewhere,—of their forming "The Evangelical Congregational Society,"—of this society's building a meeting-house "in modern style, having a steeple and a clock,"—and more than all, of the dedication, October 31,

1832; and compresses the whole into the pleasing compass of *nine lines!* A most notable example of brevity, which reminds us of another author of his name, but perhaps of wider fame than our Mr. Butler is destined to gain by his sometimes expanded, and then contracted, history. But, on the whole, we find no disposition to complain. It might not have been so, if Mr. Butler, *in his way*, had undertaken an historical account of all these important transactions. Indeed, we should not have complained if he had found no place at all for us in such a book as his—"*no, not so much as to set a foot on.*" Mr. Butler seems to have prepared his book for one class only in the community; not for general reading and popularity. It was doubtless very pleasant for him to write the history of those with whom he agrees in sentiment, and very unpleasant for him to have his thoughts and feelings disturbed by the intrusion of such unwelcome subjects, as the history of evangelical religion, and churches *im*proper; for these are quite a different thing from "*the church proper—of the First Parish,*" in very many instances. These considerations should excuse brevity on his part, when treating upon such subjects, and *the other side* of history generally. But we pass over all these things; neither lay we a meddlesome finger upon those delicious morsels, which doubtless Mr. Butler prepared expressly for others.*

Near the close of this chapter he informs the public, that at the decease of the late pastor, the present incumbent became "sole pastor" of "*The Evangelical Congregational* Society." And again, "without the necessary correction, the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of the first church" in this place was "noticed by the Evangelical Congregational *Society.*" There seems to be throughout, something like a studied attempt to leave this church altogether in the back ground, with scarcely an admitted existence. He does, indeed, when

* See History, p. 323.

noticing us, use the word *church*, in two places, where he could hardly force a passage without, as in the choice of pastor and deacons, officers peculiar to a church. Otherwise, he is silent as to the being of such a body. The few inorganic fragments, broken off from this church when it dissolved its connection with the town, consisting mainly of a very few sisters, and gathered up with others, and organized into a *Unitarian church*, September 4, 1832, he styles "the church *proper*." Of course he means to signify his opinion, that the two hundred or more credible members, who relinquished their connection with the town in a perfectly *organic* capacity, retaining the pastor and each of the deacons, constituted a church *im*proper, if at all; so that it is not so strange, that he refrains from speaking of what he seems to regard as an incongruous body, *with no right to be.*

But perhaps Mr. Butler meant to signify his ideas of a church only in the sense of *civil law*, recognizing no church, but in a civil sense. This is the more probable from the fact, that he speaks of "the first parish, and *the church thereof;*" and again, in a kind of *apostolic epistle* which he has inserted in his book, it is written, "The church *of the first parish* send greeting,"* carrying the *civil* idea, or definition of a church, since the modern construction of law relative to church rights within our courts of justice. This idea of a church is, that it cannot exist without a parish,—that it is such a *creature* of the parish, as must be subservient to it, as the less to the greater, and that the parish, in the *loss* or *defect* of a church, has the power and right to create one.† If this was Mr. Butler's intent, and not to unchurch us, as a *religious* and *spiritual* body, we shall not complain, only saying, that we admit no such idea of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as this. We go

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* See Hist. p. 323.

† See Mass. Term Reports, Vol. XVI. p. 488, and onward.

not to "*the powers that be*" here below, to ascertain what is the construction, the nature and the relations of a true church. We own no such connection between church and state, as this,—no such dependence of the one upon the other. We ground our claims *to be the original church*, wholly upon scriptural considerations, and the sanctions of *ecclesiastical* law, as we believe this obtained in the primitive days of Christianity, and has generally obtained in our own country. We maintain, that a church is an independent body, as much so as a parish, and no more; that it is *in no sense* the creature of a parish, nor subject to it, because a parish, as such, can never create a *church of Christ.* It has the elements of existence from a higher source, and of perpetuation wholly within itself. It is subject only to its Supreme Head, and its relation to a parish is only *incidental and conventional*, and in no way compromises its independence. This church rests its claim to be the true spiritual descendant of the first church formed in this place, upon two facts, which cannot be successfully controverted. It is the only union of visible believers, in a church relation, that has continuously preserved an organized form from the first in this place, which form consists of the proper and scriptural officers of a church. These are the organs of a church, and it has no others. The *very* few relics which the church left behind, when it left the town, by as free, as rightful and as scriptural an act as ever any church put forth, to say the least, were inorganic, and remained so some seven or eight months. We never have disputed their right to be a church, in their own form, but they are not the spiritual body that begun to be in 1747. We know that they were left in "possession" of its earthly habitation and its material contents, but the rights of the cuckoo are not different in this respect. The other certain fact is, that this body, thus regularly perpetuated in an organic form, with a regular succession of spiritual

generations of believers, has, even from the very first, continued to hold the same faith *for substance of doctrine.* It never has had any conflicting or contradictory creeds. At its origin, no formal creed was adopted for itself, separate from the churches generally; for in those early times the Congregational churches were all understood to be united in faith under the "*Assembly's Confession*," adopted by them with so much unanimity at their Synod, held in Cambridge, and afterwards in Boston. The original covenant upon which the church was gathered, was not designed as a summary of Christian doctrine, though it is distinctly evangelical. For some reason, the second pastor displaced this for the covenant *still used* in this church, with some few additions. At the same time, he introduced the first formal creed into the church, aside from the general confession, considered in those times as applicable to all regular Congregational churches. The only two verbal formularies of faith which this church has ever adopted, are published together, and they are as harmonious in *spirit*, as they are within the same paper envelope. No man can point out any doctrinal conflict between the two. Whoever should undertake it, might undertake, with equal chance of success, to bring the "Apostles' Creed," and the "Thirty-nine Articles," into a state of antagonism. There is nothing asserted in the first, that is denied in the second, neither is there any thing asserted in the second, that is denied in the first, either directly or indirectly. The second perfectly contains the first, and more, but is no more in conflict with it, *than Paul is with Jesus Christ.* The first, or Groton creed —for it seems it was borrowed from Dr. Chaplin's church —was very brief. It contains nothing to which almost any religionist could not subscribe, *except a* UNITARIAN. The very first sentence repels and paralyzes him. It affirms nothing so distinctly as Trinitarianism, and condemns nothing so outright as Unitarianism. The church

never laid aside the use of it because of unbelief in its generalities, but because it wanted a more specific formulary. Therefore, for such reasons as the above, we think we ought not to fall victims to Mr. Butler's "exclusive system," which seems to come very near *unchurching* all churches that are not "*of the first parish*," or some parish. Those churches that are of such origin, and in such subjection, we neither wish to unchurch, nor shall we ever controvert any claims that they may set up.

One more topic remains, and we shall have done with this history. This is the singular manner in which it notices the CENTENNIAL of this church. It is in harmony, however, with all Mr. Butler has to say of Mr. Howe and his friends subsequent to *the division*. He says:

"The 29th day of January, 1847, being, * * * * without making the necessary correction for change of style, the one hundredth of the organization of the first church in Pepperell, was noticed by the Evangelical Congregational society as a festival. The pastor pronounced a discourse on the occasion, containing an interesting account of the first settlement of the place, the organization and progress of the church, the building of the meeting-houses, the ordination of ministers, and their character and success in discharging their duties, down to the present time."

Thus he seems to deny us the honor of a centennial altogether, because we did not, in his opinion, "make the *necessary correction*," so he calls it a "*festival* noticed"—not by any church, proper or improper—but "by the Evangelical Congregational Society." We regret that Mr. Butler was not more careful in testing his facts. Surely the feasting and the mirth, if there were such, are not to be laid to the account of the *evangelical* portion of the community. Neither was the society of which he speaks, an actor on that occasion. It was a CHURCH *centennial*, and instead of a "festival," there was the quiet, solemn and appropriate observance of *the Lord's Supper*. It was a religious exercise from the beginning to the end, confined to the appropriate reminiscences of a centennial.

We have only to say further, that we believe all, rightfully concerned in that interesting occasion, were perfectly satisfied, both with the time and observances of that day. In choosing their time for reasons that seemed good and satisfactory to themselves, without deeming it important to make this author's "necessary correction," they followed worthy examples. A church centennial in Dedham, and a town centennial celebration in Merrimack, New Hampshire, not to mention more, were held without correcting the style. The General Association of Massachusetts recommended to the churches a time for a bi-centennial of the adoption of the Cambridge Platform, without this emendation of dates. Of what imaginable consequence is it, whether such a celebration be held according to *civil* or *solar* time? By so doing, we are not aware that any offence was committed against the rules of Christian propriety, or morality.

In the last paragraph of this chapter, the author falls into a slight mistake in informing the public that the present pastor of this church performed the immodest as well as mysterious act, in 1847, of describing his own character and success in the ministry, down to the present time, 1848!

We now dismiss this history with a high value of its *general* worth, and instructive character, where its author's private views are not concerned. Other documents are referred to in the vote calling for this Review, but the Committee are of opinion, that they neither need nor merit any attention whatever. Such is their character, that they carry their own refutation with them wherever they may go among *the candid and the truth loving*. Their most serious attacks upon the character of the church and its reverend dead, have been already repelled in the foregoing Review.

Thus the Committee have endeavored faithfully to discharge the most unwelcome duty assigned them,—that of

detecting the sophistry and the misrepresentations, and of refuting the unrighteous charges directed against the honored dead of this church, and against the church itself. Most gladly would they have avoided the painful and mortifying task. Long and anxiously did they ponder the question,—Does duty require the truth to be spoken? Does the honor of Christ's cause, and due respect for the lamented dead, demand the clearing away of these false imputations? They have hesitated, delayed and prayed to be excused from so ungracious and humiliating a task, till justice seemed to look down from the skies, and the traduced and dishonored dead to start from the grave, and rebuke such doubts and delays, and to summon them to their assigned duty. We feared, also, that silence might be maturing a conviction in the public mind, that there might be truth in what has been so boldly and publicly said and repeated to the injury of official, departed worth. We therefore addressed ourselves to our allotted work. We have spoken plainly; we believe, before God, truthfully. We trust we have not compromised the sacredness and dignity of the Christian character in performing this our allotted work. It may give pain in some quarters. If so, let it be considered who furnished the necessity. We have not willingly afflicted nor grieved any one. If any feel the stroke, may it lead to due "carefulness." We have now spoken for the first time—*this once*, for the consideration of the public, to disabuse candid minds that may have been led to false conclusions by what has been so long and so boldly asserted for truth. To the judgment of such minds, we commend our humble endeavors. If they are not based on truth and approved by justice, let this our work come to nought.

Pepperell

A

REVIEW

REVIEWED IN A LETTER

TO

DAVID ANDREWS, NEHEMIAH CUTTER, SAMUEL FARRAR,
ARNOLD HUTCHINSON, AND VRYLING SHATTUCK,

Committee of the Church.

BY CALEB BUTLER.

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LETTER.

Gentlemen,

I have lately received from under the hand of one of your number, a pamphlet, purporting to be "A Review" of my "History of the Ecclesiastical Affairs of Pepperell." By this presentation I suppose you expect some acknowledgments from me in return; and comity requires that you should not be disappointed in your expectations. If some delay should happen, other avocations, and my advanced age, must be my apology.

Upon examination of your Review, I find it embraces a much larger scope than the two short chapters in my history which relate to the ecclesiastical affairs of Pepperell, and contains comments on language and statements, though on the same and kindred topics, yet not found in the work reviewed. Had you confined your Review to my statements and language, your task would have been much lighter, and I should have been relieved of the labor of separating from other matters your remarks applied solely to my publication. But I must content myself to take it as I find it, and do all in my power to make due acknowledgments for errors corrected, and to vindicate and confirm truths.

You commence by stating what are "the essential qualifications of a historian, enumerating five particulars, and disclaiming to have any concern with the latter," (last ?) to wit, "to set it forth in a lucid and interesting manner;" by which disclaimer I understand you to concede to me that ability. A courteous concession, for which I tender you my profound acknowledgments. But, in my opinion, you have omitted one qualification of a historian, more essential

than any one you have enumerated; to wit, *a strict observance of truth.* With this joined, they may all, with a little modification, be applicable to the duties of reviewers, with the following superadded, viz.: —

That no sentiment or assertion should be imputed to the author reviewed, which he does not express directly or by plain implication.

That when words of the author, taken in their common meaning or general acceptation, make out a sentiment or assertion, *that* shall be taken to be his meaning; unless some other interpretation shall clearly appear by the context to be intended.

That no latent ambiguity in an expression should be raised to distort or defeat the author's meaning.

That, in a patent ambiguity, the sense most favorable for the author shall be taken to be his true meaning.

Had you, gentlemen, restricted yourselves to such rules and duties, your labors would have been still shorter, and my replication reduced to a complaisant epistle.

Prefatory to your undertaking, you express "surprise, that a citizen of another town, in no way connected with" yours, should *volunteer* to write a particular history of your town, minutely stating those causes and proceedings which have led to a parochial division. You add, "Doubtless this instance is singular, we never knew the like"! After such a statement, and such a declaration, I am prepared to meet any others, however strange, miraculous, or absurd, without surprise or astonishment. Limited must the knowledge of that man be, who can write nothing correctly and *minutely*, if you please, concerning events happening beyond the bounds of his native hamlet or town. Groton and Pepperell no way connected? Why, gentlemen, you have never read my history, or have read it to little purpose, if you have not learned that Pepperell was an integral part of Groton, from its settlement to the year 1754, and was connected with it in the choice of a representative to the General Court till 1775. And your chairman has, I think, shown that there has been some connection in ecclesiastical affairs, the only subject you profess to review, between the two towns. Can no man write a history of a country, state, county, town, or parish, unless he belongs to it? or it is someway connected with his? Never knew the like! The school-boys of New England know, that Goldsmith, an Irishman, wrote histories of Greece and Rome; that Botta, an Italian, wrote an excellent history of the American War of the Revolution; and that

William H. Prescott, your townsman, wrote the history of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; and, to give you an example more directly in point, Lemuel Shattuck wrote a history of Concord, in the preface to which he says, "The towns of Bedford, Acton, Lincoln, and Carlisle, were incorporated principally within the original limits of Concord; and, as their history is intimately blended with that of Concord, it was thought expedient to embrace within the work the history of each of these towns, since its separate corporation." Mr. Shattuck devotes eight pages to the ecclesiastical affairs of Bedford, three to those of Acton, six to those of Lincoln, and three to those of Carlisle; yet I am not apprized that the good people of either of these towns were "surprised that a citizen of another town, no way connected with theirs, should *volunteer* to give them a history of their ecclesiastical affairs," though he did it very minutely.

The "minute particulars" of which you complain are comprised in a little more than a page of the text, and a note at the bottom, of thirteen lines. All in the text I consider necessary to give a true, faithful, and a general view of the matter under consideration, in as brief a manner as practicable. It is further observable, that, when you come to criticise the passages most objectionable, you find more faults in my brevity than in my superfluity. Such is your consistency!

You say, "In cases like this, historians generally content themselves with giving some general statement of the facts, equally acceptable to all parties concerned." This assertion I unhesitatingly deny. Historians, when faithful in performing their duty, state all the facts material to their subject, whether agreeable or disagreeable to the parties concerned; and most commonly make comments upon the transactions of men and parties, approving or censuring, according to their rectitude or iniquity. What would be the value of a history that contained nothing which in this wicked world would be unpleasant to some party concerned? Nearly allied to your proposed restriction is "the good old heathen maxim," to which you would confine me, "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*" Change the last word, as the moderns have done, to "*verum*," and I accept it. How highly, think you, would that history be estimated by inquirers for truth, which, in the narrations and descriptions of deceased men and their actions, should avoid all but their beauties and good deeds? If all historians had strictly observed, and should hereafter observe, this maxim as it stands in the original, Nero and Caligula might seem to us good, humane, and pious empe-

rors; Napoleon, to posterity a second Washington; and Benedict Arnold, a first-rate patriot. You say truly, gentlemen, that such a course would not satisfy such an ambition as mine. My ambition prompts me to write the truth, the whole truth if important, and nothing but the truth, neither criminating the innocent nor excusing the guilty; and, if my ambition be not unreasonable in its aspirations, the testimonials of competent judges, whose approbation I duly appreciate, are given in sufficient abundance to satisfy it. If, in narrating the words or deeds of opposing parties, those of the one appear honest, lawful, and honorable, and those of the other dishonest, fraudulent, and mean, the fault belongs not to me as a historian, but to the delinquent party.

You proceed to accuse me of picturing and shadowing your ecclesiastical affairs by detailing *minutiæ*, so as to reflect great credit upon the more liberally inclined, and the greatest discredit upon all who were not included in my phrase, "good people of Pepperell generally." This accusation, if just, is sufficiently extenuated by the apology above. But, from this class, "good people of Pepperell," you say I exclude Mr. Howe and "a large majority of the church," and falsely assert that *I allow it*. Now, these assertions, gentlemen, uncandid, unchristian, untrue as they are, admit of no sufficient apology. No such exclusion is anywhere in my history expressed or implied. How, then, could I "allow it"? In the paragraph in which I use the phrase, "good people of Pepperell generally," I was narrating the rise and progress of the exclusive system, so called, by the operation of which, and other causes, our towns and parishes have since been rent asunder, and Christian friends and neighbors set at variance; to which system, I said to their praise, the Rev. Mr. Bullard and the good people of Pepperell generally were strongly opposed. Exclude Mr. Howe from the "good," this expression could not; for, in Mr. Bullard's lifetime, he was not known, and probably not heard of in Pepperell. Nor did it exclude all or nearly all the church; for that was undoubtedly composed of as "good people" as were to be found in Pepperell. Neither did it claim Mr. Bullard as a Unitarian, as you have somewhere insinuated, but as a liberal man, as you declare he was. If any were excluded by the expression, "good people of Pepperell generally," it was that class which you represent as "gathered within the sweep of my charity." Furthermore, it is not the practice of liberal men, of whom I profess to be one, to exclude from the appellation of "good men," and from the

Christian pale, all who do not subscribe to a particular creed. That is the peculiar prerogative of the creators and abettors of that odious system, of which I was relating the rise, progress, and consequences. The only two instances in which I name Mr. Howe in connexion with "a great majority of the church," are in relating transactions happening ten years after Mr. Bullard's death, in neither of which is any expression of exclusion from the "good people" named as actors ten years before; and of course no acknowledgment of it. By the expression, "good people of Pepperell generally," I intended, and every intelligent, unprejudiced reader will understand (for the words can plainly mean nothing else, whatever your interpretation of them may be), honest, pious, charitable, religious people. Limited to Unitarians it could not be; for I doubt whether at the time of Mr. Bullard's death, there were as many professed Unitarians in Pepperell, as there were righteous persons in Sodom before Lot and his family left that city. Please, therefore, in this place and in all others, where you have sneeringly quoted the passage, as though it savored of Unitarianism, by "*good people*," to understand "good people," and nothing more or less.

Permit me, gentlemen, in this prefatory part of my epistle, to ask, — Do you think a "sense of duty — to those who have not the truth," — to posterity — "to the worthy but injured dead," — required you so to misrepresent my book, as you have done on your 4th page, and to give it such a "false shadowing"? Do you deem such abuse "something important to disabuse the minds of the unwary"? and "to give correct information to future generations"? Should your Review chance to be seen by future generations, I hope some copy of the work reviewed will survive the *wear and tear* of time, and accompany it. Posterity will need no unusual "light" to enable them to discern the truth, if they can have both to examine. You think I have been "indebted to imagination for my facts." That is a faculty of the mind which I do not claim to possess in perfection. I had access to the town and parish records, and those of the First Church, a centennial address by the Rev. C. Babbidge, and another by the Rev. D. Andrews, and I made use of my own personal knowledge. Perhaps these were not all reliable authorities; but, where I found discrepancies, I endeavored to discover and adopt the truth.

You complain of the partisan character of my book, which you say has condemned it, and "well nigh banished it from the place." Were it so, you might have good reason to

complain; for who, think you, would be the sufferers by its banishment? Those who, after your denunciation of it, would never read a book, "the high value of whose general worth and instructive character" you are constrained to acknowledge? or I, who can dispose of my book to such as may better understand it, and more justly appreciate its true value?

Before proceeding to notice your criticisms on particular parts of my book, I will once for all remark, that you have put marks of quotation to many words and phrases not used by me, and so intermingled them with such as I did use, that the uninformed reader may mistake them for mine; and I cannot myself, without much trouble and care, separate them. This I consider a very unfair and dishonorable method of imputing to me the supposed sins of others.

Having thus in your prefatory remarks endeavored to prejudice your readers by general reprobation, you "address yourselves to your unwelcome (?) task."

And first by *paralepsis*, a favorite figure with you, I am severely censured for the manner in which I have trifled with the views of the first pastor of the church, upon the agency of fallen spirits in human affairs; and for relating a story about moving timber, "even *naming* the parties, as if to disgrace them to their inheritors," (descendants?) and of then sending my book to them to buy and read. *To buy* they are not obliged. To read, I suppose, they dare not, after your bull of excommunication.

It is true I copied somewhat largely from a discourse of Mr. Emerson, with a view, without any disparagement to his holiness or goodness, to show the great change which has taken place for the better, in the superstitious notions of the people. I would that I had as good an example of change from bigotry to liberality. As to the "street squabble," I do not think the Lakins or the Shattucks feel much honored or disgraced by the relation of the matter. Whether worthy or unworthy of a place in history, is a question of taste, and "*de gustibus non est disputandum.*" It was certainly not worthy of your sneer.

By another *paralepsis*, you next notice my good opinion of Mr. Emerson, not questioning "my right, as it were *ex cathedra*, to denounce such men as the Rev. Jonathan Edwards." (I wish you had translated your Latin, as you have done in other places; for I do not perceive its application in this connexion.) I certainly have as just a right to express my views of the unscriptural and metaphysical *language* (not *theology*) of clergymen, and of their absurd and contradictory

dogmas, as clergymen and doctors have to impugn the decisions of men acting in their proper and appropriate sphere, as interpreters of the laws of our country. And I think the characters of our highest judicial officers as secure from any harm of Calvinistic "bespattering," as that of Dr. Edwards is from liberal. You say, "Mr. Emerson's theology abated nothing from that of Edwards, Whitefield," &c. Perhaps so. I am under no obligation either to grant or deny it.

The greater portion of your 6th and 7th pages I might pass over in silence, were it not for your disingenuousness in putting marks of quotation to words and sentiments which I nowhere wrote or expressed. In my biographical sketch of Mr. Bullard, but two sentences can be found, to which, as Calvinists, you can possibly object. In one I said he was a Trinitarian, but, on other points, more of an Arminian than Calvinist; in the other, that he was strongly opposed to the exclusive system. My authorities for these are my own personal knowledge, — I knew him well, often heard him preach and converse on religious subjects, — and the Rev. Mr. Andrews' centennial discourse, from which I quote: "It is probable that his theological views were of a medium character." "In his theological views he was a decided Trinitarian, called himself a moderate Calvinist." "While he did not receive some of the stronger points of a Calvin or a Hopkins," &c. "Though once somewhat prejudiced against reformations," &c. Was not the exclusive system one of the "reformations" against which he was prejudiced? I know of nothing more repugnant, than that unchristian measure, to his uniform courtesy, liberality, and Christian charity. Your whole labor to prove that Mr. Bullard was not a Unitarian, or verging towards it, seems to me entirely gratuitous; not called for by any expression in my history. I cannot but admire, however, your logical manner of proving him a Calvinist, in opposition to these quotations from Mr. Andrews' discourse. "He took an *active part* in ordaining a man over a Calvinistic church." Therefore he was a Calvinist. Very well. Dr. Thayer, of Lancaster, in an ecclesiastical council, voted for the ordination of a Calvinistic minister. Was not he a Calvinist? Of the same order is the reasoning of Mr. Bullard's instructing children (a duty almost universal, of ministers of that time, whether Calvinists or Arminians) in the Shorter Catechism; and *rotating** with the several schools.

* Probably derived from the Latin, *roto, rotare,* to turn round like a wheel. But coiners have a right to stamp their own currency.

The remainder of your pretended vindication of Mr. Bullard's Calvinistic character being foreign to any thing said by me, though illustrated by beautiful figures, together with his son-in-law's certificate, I pass over, and come to what you call the main object of your Review.

And, first, you lay down three representations, which, you say, I make on pages 320—322 of my history. First, you say, I represent "the *town* as taking *great* precautions to procure a minister, who would be liberal in the matter of exchanges, without regard to religious sentiment." My words were these: "On the occasion of settling a minister, caution was taken to pursue such measures as should prevent the town and church, hitherto remarkable for their unanimity, from division."

The second representation you say I made is in your words: "Mr. Howe, through his ordaining council, made a solemn promise to his parishioners, that he would exchange with all congregational ministers indiscriminately."

My words were: "He gave such assurances of his willingness to exchange pulpits with each member of the council, and all neighboring ministers of regular standing of the congregational order, that the remonstrants were satisfied."

The third representation in your words is: "Mr. Howe, overawed by the authors and abettors of the exclusive system, violated that promise, and so became the guilty cause of rending asunder," &c.

In my book it stands thus: "As exclusiveness became more strictly enforced by its authors and abettors, Mr. Howe was compelled either to violate his promise, or lose fellowship with the friends of that system. He chose the former alternative."

I have thus brought my statements, and your representations of them, into proximity, for the sake of convenient reference.

A caviller, if so disposed, might say and undertake to prove, that there are material differences in these, and that you have not fairly and candidly represented my meaning; that my words in the first point, for instance, "*caution was taken* to pursue such measures as should *prevent a division*," does not warrant your representation, "*great* precautions taken *by the town* to procure a minister," &c.; that, in the second, "gave such assurance of his willingness to exchange with ministers of regular standing," does not amount to "a *solemn* promise to his parishioners to exchange with all ministers *indiscriminately;*" and that the plain inference from my

third statement is, that the "authors and abettors of the exclusive system" were "the guilty cause," &c. and not *Mr. Howe*, as you represent.

But you will undoubtedly pay no regard to what such caviller might say; but maintain that you have in nowise misrepresented me, or given any false "shadowing" to an iota I may have penned; or at least that our statements are substantially the same. If, then, I shall be able to prove my own statements in my own words, I shall substantially prove your allegations respecting them. Let this be remembered, when we come to the proof.

You express surprise at the "*coolness*," and complain of the "*positiveness*," with which I make my assertions, and set them for sale at the "market price." (I hope your chairman does not complain of the *price*.) I am not aware that propriety fixes any definite number of degrees of coolness or positiveness beyond which the truth should not be told; and truth is so scarce in our times that the "market price" should be no obstacle to its attainment.

The remainder of your 8th page, containing innuendoes about courage and cowardice, following bad examples, and becoming partakers of the sins of others, is couched in language and style so far below ordinary aspersion, that I pass it with no feeling but that of contempt. Were I to enter the lists with you in "calling hard names," in scurrility, vulgarity, and abuse, time and patience, not want of occasion, would fail me, ere I could achieve a victory.

As though you had not yet sufficiently prejudiced your readers against my book before giving them a specimen of it, you add, that my paragraphs, about to be criticized, "commence and continue on with a little more than usual *positiveness* and *acrimony* of liberal writers." Positiveness I have above considered. For "acrimony" I have searched in vain. If liberal writers use less than I, surely they are not amenable for much. Perhaps you adopt the old adage, with a little variation, "Nothing so *acrimonious* as the truth."

Among the many truths contained in my book which you deny, the account of the rise, progress, and effects of the exclusive system, I believe, is nowhere included. This I briefly and plainly stated in the paragraph from which you make the first extract for comment; and I proceeded in my narration as you have quoted on your 9th page. In what word or phrase is there any acrimony, unless truth plainly told contains acrimony? But what are your comments? Why, you scruple my authority to say what I did *not* say,

and positively deny the truth of what I *never asserted.* You deny no fact by me asserted or intimated. You say, "It is not true that the people generally desired a Unitarian minister." I never said or pretended they did; for, as I have before observed, there were but few Unitarians in Pepperell at that time. The purpose for which I said "caution was taken" should be kept in remembrance. It was, I said, to prevent the town and church, hitherto remarkable for their unanimity, from division; and not, as you would insinuate, to obtain a Unitarian minister. The attainment of what you suggest would have been an inevitable cause of division, not of prevention; for, wherever we find a majority of Unitarians, or a Unitarian minister settled, we see a secession of Calvinists, and a disruption of church and town or parish. Witness the towns of Ashby, Townsend, Shirley, Groton, Dunstable, Tyngsborough, Westford, Chelmsford, Littleton, Boxborough, Stowe, Concord, Acton, Carlisle, and twenty other towns in this county and vicinity, wherein the majority are liberally-minded, and the minority have seceded. This steadfast adherence to law, order, and Christian charitableness, by Unitarians, you are pleased, in another connexion, to designate as "a morbid hankering after old meeting-houses, old puritanic communion-plate, old church records, funds, and such like." Those who can deliberately utter such revilings are not to be envied for their meekness, benevolence, or Christian charity.

Of the "modern privilege" you mention, I can form no definite idea, so must pass it unnoticed; having no occasion to deviate from old accustomed rights. After a few other impertinent remarks, you proceed and quote another sentence, which you say is remarkable in its structure, "because its basis is like that of an inverted cone"! Now, for my life I cannot discern the resemblance. Has an inverted cone's basis any peculiar properties? Your criticism, your wit, your sarcasm, or whatever else you intended, is lost upon my obtuse intellect. Please to explain, that I may enjoy the simile.

After completing the quotation of a little more than a page of my book (supplying the place of about two lines, which perhaps were too *acrimonious* for you to transcribe with an &c.), you a second time make a statement of what you call my representations, which embraces five particulars, instead of three, as before, and differing also in phraseology, and again draw your own conclusion, not mine, from the premises; to wit, that Mr. Howe "divided the town," and was

"a *perfidious man and minister of Christ.*" I drew no such inferences from the premises, as I expressed them.

Again, "that you may present this matter in a *clear light* before the public mind," you propose three questions, as containing the state of the controversy, for discussion; varying somewhat in phraseology from either of the former divisions of the subject, as well as from my statements.

Your first question, as now stated, is, "Did the town, or even the remonstrants, attempt any such precaution as Mr. B. represents?"

I do not object to this form of the question, except to the word *town.* I take the affirmative. I named three precautionary measures: selecting a council, remonstrating to the council, and interrogating Mr. Howe. The first I prove by the record. It stands recorded in its appropriate place, that a Committee of seven persons "were appointed as a joint Committee to make the necessary arrangements for the ordination" of Mr. Howe, three for the church and four for the town, three at least of which Committee were of the liberal party; and that *that* Committee agreed to invite the pastors of the neighboring churches, naming them, with delegates, to ordain Mr. Howe; which council, it is well known and not denied, was composed of nearly equal numbers of Calvinistic and liberal ministers. The record further states, "The church were led to adopt it (the course pursued above), to avoid an unhappy division, and preserve the union and best good of the church and town;" precisely the object of that measure, as I in my history stated it.

The second I prove by having myself seen the remonstrance, and by your own evidence that it was laid before the council.

The third, that Mr. Howe was interrogated by the council, is abundantly proved by your own evidence, and has never been denied.

The affirmative, then, seems to me to be completely established, without the aid of your dark lantern.

But your evidence and arguments, if any you have in the negative, must be answered. What do you offer? In the very outset you make a departure from the issue, introduce new matter, not material to it, and tender another issue; thereby confessing the affirmative of the first; your new issue being whether the measures pursued were "*solely from apprehensions respecting exchanges.*" To this, being immaterial or surplusage, I am not bound, by the rules of pleading, to answer, and could safely demur thereto; but, inasmuch as

I asserted it incidentally in relation to the remonstrance, and it being true in point of fact, I shall defend it. And, according to a trait of our nationality, I answer the question, as you now put it, by asking another. Did you ever know or hear of any disaffection, dissatisfaction, difficulty, or "*bone of contention* (using your own homely expression), between Mr. Howe and his people, other than on the subject of exchanges? Yourselves have answered this question, on pages 39 and 40 of your Review. You there say, "We have yet to learn that any one complained that he did not discharge faithfully all his pastoral and parochial duties. There seems to have been no complaint against him in any particular, save the one implied in an earnest attempt to prove him guilty of violating an obligation to exchange with Unitarians." This, if true, settles the matter. But I rely not wholly upon your testimony. Intelligent men are yet alive, who were actors in that case. Ask them if they had any other motives. If they refuse to answer, or you should not believe them, examine their actions, which sometimes speak louder than words, and you will learn that nothing but the subject of exchanges caused the "agitating, agitating, agitating," you mention.

But what say you on the negative side of the question, as now put? Why, you stoutly deny the affirmative, and say that the contrary appears. And, instead of proving the "contrary," your evidence and arguments tend to prove, if any thing, *not* that the measures pursued arose "solely from apprehensions respecting exchanges," but that this "*bone of contention*" originated with certain men on the council. Why, gentlemen, you resemble a certain species of insects, "when I put my finger on you, you are not there." Where the subject originated I said not, and care not; but, for the sake of argument, I will say it did not originate with the council, and follow you one hop further. To support the supposition, that the council or a part of them originated this controversy, it seems necessary that they should go to Pepperell some time previous to the ordination, electioneer for seats in that council, and give instructions for the preparation and signing of the remonstrance, for it would require a considerable time to have all these matters arranged, and to afford the further requisite time to get up a counter-petition, with a hundred and forty-four signatures; and, after the assembling of the council, should proceed in the examination, and then inform the remonstrants that all was done to their satisfaction, — all for the credit of origi-

nating a bone of contention. In my humble view, it appears much more reasonable to suppose that these matters were all done according to the common course; that the gentlemen of the council were selected without their previous knowledge; that they came to Pepperell unapprised of the existence of a remonstrance; that they were there informed of it, and desired to propound the questions respecting exchanges; and that they communicated the same to Mr. Howe the evening before the ordination, as you have related, that he might be prepared to answer; and, finally, that its presentation to the council, after the examination (if such was the fact, which, with all these preliminary matters, are wholly immaterial to the main questions), was purely accidental, and probably owing to the promptness of the council in performing their duties. Your own statements favor this natural supposition of the course of events; but you have the faculty to draw false conclusions from your premises. You have searched the town records, you say, and looked through the transactions of the town concerning Mr. Howe's call and settlement in vain. Who of common understanding in such matters would think of looking into the town records for the apprehensions or proceedings of individual remonstrants? No one ever pretended that the inhabitants of the town, in their municipal or parochial capacities, ever remonstrated, or acted upon "*apprehensions*" about ministerial exchanges. Yet, because you are unable to find them there, your conclusion is, the council originated them!

But you raise another and a fatal objection to the remonstrance. One of the seventy-nine supposed legal voters was, you say, *fresh* (recently?) from another State; and you appeal with the most profound modesty to me as a lawyer, to say if he was a legal voter in this State. With the same degree of modesty I declare to you, gentlemen, that I cannot decide that point peremptorily, as you do in many instances, till you or some one shall have informed me, whether the supposed delinquent was an alien, or a citizen of the United States; whether he was twenty-one years of age, or under; whether he had resided in this State one year or less, and some one of its towns six months or less; and, finally, whether he had paid any tax legally assessed in this State within two years. Till some one of these points shall be established unfavorably to his privilege, I shall consider him, though "*fresh*" from another State, a legal voter, and the remonstrance consequently valid.

I have now, I think, demonstrated the affirmative of your

first question, that "such precautionary measures were taken as I represented," and also confirmed the truth of several immaterial matters by you denied under this head. The "contrary" which you said "appeared" seems to be lost in the effulgence of light thrown over it. I might, therefore, pass over several pages, Mr. Breck's palaver included, to the second question, but for one or two matters I wish to notice; and also for that you have anticipated in part the next and most important part of the controversy.

You assert, and cite evidence to prove, that the remonstrance was not presented to the council till after Mr. Howe had been interrogated respecting his future exchanges. The time is wholly immaterial. That there was a remonstrance presented, and that Mr. Howe was interrogated, is all I asserted, and all that is material. As to the purport of the interrogatories put, there seems to be no discrepancy in our statements. I said, "Mr. Howe was fully and freely interrogated on that point by the council." Mr. Moore says, "I recollect when he was pressed by some of the council respecting his exchanging." Mr. Breck thought "the liberals were very illiberal in *bearing down so long and hard.*" So far there can be no doubt of the truth of my statement. The most direct and conclusive testimony as to the precise questions propounded, is that of Dr. Thayer; not in the mangled form you give, but in the place whence you extract it. He says, "I proposed to him a question of this import: May the liberal ministers in this neighborhood, as they are called, rely on your intercourse with them in the way of exchanges?" Others corroborate this testimony; but this alone is sufficient. I omit Mr. Howe's answer till I come to your second question, its appropriate place, with the passing remark, that it was so shaped as to "keep himself clear," as you elegantly express it, "of the hamper of a *pledge*, which they professed not to desire to *saddle* upon him."

You lay some stress upon the fact, that the questions were propounded by, and the answers given to, the council. You will recollect that you, in stating my representations, said the promise was made to his parishioners "through his ordaining council." This was the proper mode of doing it. And think you that a promise so made is less obligatory? It would so appear by your unwearied effort to prove the fact.

Now, before considering conclusions at which you arrive on this head, let us revert to the commencement, where you proposed to set the matter in a clear light. You there stated your first point to be, "Did the town, or even the remon-

strants, attempt any such precautions respecting exchanges?" With the exception there taken, I took the affirmative, and proved it by the record, by known documents, and by your own confessions apparent in every attempt to evade it. I followed you through a labyrinth of irrelevant matter, combating your evidence and arguments, if such they may be called, as I think successfully; and now we come to your conclusion, which, with seeming satisfaction and complacency, you state thus: "Thus it is clear to a demonstration, that the *town* neither exacted nor thought of any such promise; that the remonstrance of the seventy-nine made no allusion to it; and that this requiring of assurances as to a particular course of ministerial exchanges, originated with the so-called liberal men on the council." Three answers to one simple question, which required only a *yea* or a *nay*, not one of them a direct answer to the question proposed, not one of them a negation to any proposition in my book, or inconsistent with it! What logic! But, having attained a demonstration so satisfactory to your minds, you do not quit the point without a thrust aimed at a part of the council, stating what they did in "secret conclave," accusing them of holding up a "bugbear" "*in terrorem*," &c. How came you, gentlemen, by a knowledge of what was transacted in "secret conclave," and of what horrid "bugbears" were therein hatched? Belief in the "agency of evil spirits" seems not to have been entirely eradicated from the minds of the present inhabitants of Pepperell.

We now arrive at the second point in your general division: "Did Mr. Howe ever make a promise, or give any pledge, to any party concerned, that he would exchange with liberal clergymen?" You have stated this matter four several times, each statement varying in words from the others, and all varying from my statement. How can one defend himself from an adversary, who thus changes ground, hops, and dodges in your manner? My statement, the only one I am obliged to support, was, "He gave such assurances of his willingness to exchange pulpits with each of the council, and all neighboring ministers of regular standing of the Congregational order, that the remonstrants were satisfied, and withdrew all objections." The word *pledge* introduced in your third and fourth statements of this point in the controversy, I nowhere used, or any synonyme of it; so I shall not contend that any was given, as I shall have occasion hereafter more fully to notice. In your first paraphrase of my statement, instead of quoting verbatim (the only safe

mode of representing an author's meaning truly), you recollect you said "*made a solemn promise.*" If, therefore, I prove "*assurance of willingness,*" you are estopped from denying a "*solemn promise;*" and justly you should be estopped; for *in foro conscientiæ*, with all honest, honorable, upright men and Christians, the one, if not identical with the other, is equally obligatory, and the violation of the one as obnoxious to blame as that of the other.

Divested of surplusage and unnecessary verbiage, the simple question is, — Did Mr. Howe give satisfactory assurance that he would exchange with liberal ministers? To this question I take the affirmative, and shall rely altogether on your own statements and evidence to maintain it.

Before producing any evidence whatever, you, in your usual manner, peremptorily assert "he never did;" but you annex an exception, which nearly or quite reverses the assertion, "unless to his ordaining council." I never said he gave assurances to any except the council, or "to his parishioners through his council," as you stated it. The council were actors for all parties concerned, — town or parish, parishioners, church, church members, and pastor elect. What was said or done by them or to them was intended for the benefit of any or all concerned. They were as truly the council of the town and church as of Mr. Howe.

Before applying your evidence to my side of the question, let me remark, that, as you have seen fit to put Mr. Howe's moral and religious character in issue, he is not a competent witness in the case, though his confessions may be used against him; and that your other evidence, except what you have in a garbled and mutilated form extracted from some document not of my procurement, comes from witnesses to whom leading questions had apparently been put, and who have not been cross-examined, that the *whole truth* might appear. But as their testimony, "as far as it goes," is in my favor, I waive these objections.

Your first witness is Mr. Howe himself. What says he? Between five and six years after his ordination, in a premeditated document, he says, "I have had no intention to be exclusive in my exchanges. I have declined no one. I know not that I shall decline any one." "That part of the council at my ordination, who differed from me in sentiment, wished to be satisfied that I should not be exclusive in my exchanges." "*They were satisfied that I should not.*" This amounts to a full confession of the whole matter in issue under this head. For what, I confidently ask, could satisfy an intelligent council, short of a *promise* or *assurance?*

But, as Dr. Thayer's testimony, not originally taken either by you or me, but introduced by you, is a little more explicit, to render certainty doubly sure, I will again cite it. "I proposed to him," says this witness, "a question of this import: May the liberal ministers in this neighborhood, as they are called, rely on your holding intercourse with them in the way of exchanges? He gave an *affirmative answer*, which was so entirely satisfactory to me, that I voted for his ordination." It requires no uncommon powers of mind, nothing but plain common sense and an honest purpose, to perceive, that there was a perfect understanding between promisor and promisees, what should be the future course. Any conclusion short of this would imply either the depth of stupidity on the part of promisees, or gross deception on that of promisor.

But here is another array of evidence in the case. Mr. Howe himself, seven learned clergymen, and one layman, are introduced. New evidence, discovered after trial and verdict, is always subject to suspicion; and its recent discovery is not the only reason for suspicion in this case. The perfect sameness in meaning, the cautious use of the word *pledge*, and omission of *promise* and *assurance*, might lead to the supposition there had been a consultation and concert between some of them, how to answer to some leading question which had been put to them. But, as the single and only point proved by them is not in issue, and as the testimony does not conflict an iota with the other, and believing as I do the entire truth of what they say, I waive all objections.

Mr. Howe says, "I gave these answers in substance, and the member who put them was satisfied," referring to this answer as one, "I should be willing to exchange with the members of the council, as far as I was acquainted with them." And again, "Neither can I here give a *pledge*, which will allow my people to say, if I hereafter see fit to decline any individual, I had *forfeited* my *pledge*." Here you see Mr. Howe acknowledges the *promise* or *willingness* to exchange, but refuses to give a *pledge*. The council did not ask one.

The first clergyman says, "I recollect your prudent refusal to give a *pledge*."

The second, "He did not wish to entangle himself by any *pledge*."

The third, "That you gave no *pledge* on the subject."

The fourth, "I well remember, that though he did consent to exchange with those members of the council with whom he was acquainted, yet he refused to *pledge* himself."

The fifth, "He did not consent to *pledge* himself."

The sixth, "You could not give any *pledge*."

The seventh, who is introduced rather as a compurgator than a principal witness, says, "Having read the certificates" above, "showing that he gave no *pledge*, I certify that what is contained in them is true."

The layman, acknowledging the willingness, says, "Mr. Howe would not give a *pledge*. Rather than pledge himself, he preferred the ordination should not take place."

You will observe that the words *promise* and *assurance* are not used by Mr. Howe, or by either of the clergymen. The layman, not in a direct but incidental manner, connects *promise* and *pledge* as synonymous words. The clergymen knew better, if he did not.

Now, "I have yet to learn" for what purpose these proofs or certificates were introduced. Not surely to prove there was no *promise;* for some of them specifically, and all by implication, admit one. If there were no *promise*, a *pledge* would be nugatory. Had there been no other proof of a promise or assurance than these, and they had been within my reach, I should certainly have cited them without hesitation to prove one. Is it possible they were introduced with a design to deceive and impose upon unintelligent or incautious readers, who would not distinguish between a boisterous shout of victory and a logical deduction? Were I writing for the edification of such, I should condescend to refer them to their dictionaries and lexicons, wherein they might learn, that to *promise* means to *assure; pledge*, to pawn or deposit something to secure the fulfilment of a promise. A man in debt promises to pay, and mortgages, *pledges*, or pawns his lands, goods, or chattels, to secure the fulfilment of the promise. A lady runs in debt, and *pledges* her jewels as security for payment: a soldier promises, and *pledges* his honor to fulfil. In all these cases, if the promise is broken, the *pledge* is *forfeited.* But to you, gentlemen, and to the learned clergymen, who made the certificates, these instructions and exemplifications are impertinent. Mr. Howe perfectly understood what he said to the council, to the committee in 1828, and in his Fast Sermon, having had at each time opportunity to premeditate. And to his language the witnesses seem to have adapted their answers; all stating, or admitting, by impliction, a *promise*, or *assurance of willingness*, but denying a *pledge*. And a PLEDGE was never asked or desired. The council disclaimed it, and the liberal part of the committee in 1828 exclaimed, "No, no, we do not expect it."

Now, gentlemen, spend a little time to read and critically examine all your proofs, including these certificates, without inquiring when, how, by what means, or for what purpose, they came into existence, for it concerns not me; then read the "unrighteous charge of perfidy published against him" in my history, *if you can find it*, and thereby test the validity of your claim to a triumphant victory.

You next aim another poisoned shaft at a part of the ordaining council: "They did a thing which they ought to have blushed ever to mention." Softly, gentlemen; observe, your "good old heathen maxim, *De mortuis*," &c. These men are dead.

Lastly, under this head you introduce a "characteristic" note from the margin of my history, which belongs to the next head, "*Breach of promise.*" I therefore pass it for the present, with this brief remark, that you have "characteristically" omitted any reference to the Rev. C. Babbidge's Centennial Address, Note C, for one of my authorities.

We come now to the third and last head or division of the controversy, which in brief is, *Did Mr. Howe break or violate a promise?*

You characteristically answer this question, before adducing any reason for so doing, in the negative. And your reason then follows: "No proof has reached our minds yet to show the contrary." Very well; no proof has yet reached my mind to disprove the affirmative. Therefore, the affirmative is true. Admirable logic! This reminds me of a sophister who strenuously asserted, that man was originally a quadruped, walking on all-fours. But his only proof to maintain it was, "Nothing in history, ancient or modern, proved the *contrary*."

Now, if the two former points have been so triumphantly determined against me, why, let me ask, is this third introduced for discussion? If no precautionary measures were taken, no questions put, no assurances given, surely no promise could be broken or violated. So you manifest some misgivings, after all, of the soundness of your pretended demonstrations.

But what proofs other than "nothing to the contrary" do you offer to prove no breach of promise? None at all. You abandon that ground altogether, and attempt to make up an excuse for non-fulfilment. Is it possible, that you, who so lately exulted in the "happily discovered certificates" "which seem to have been providentially preserved" "to exculpate Mr. Howe from the charge of perfidy published against

him," "redress a most flagrant wrong done to his name," "and lift his head above his enemies round about," *should be so suddenly reduced to the humiliating necessity of excusing him for breaking a promise you had so clearly proved he never made?* It is even so. And an equally astounding fact is, that, instead of relying upon Mr. Howe's own and only valid excuse, you insist upon the futile one of ministerial courtesy, and the still more shallow one of Mr. Breck, *the fear of orthodoxy in the minds of Unitarians.* Truly has it been said, "*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*" I have nowhere said or intimated, that Mr. Howe had not a valid excuse for non-fulfilment of his promise; for I do not deny that some promises, as well as customs, are

"More honored in the breach than the observance."

But what excuse does Mr. Howe himself offer? After mentioning the supposed doctrinal views of "the liberal party," he says, "I will frankly declare, that I cannot conscientiously exchange with men of such sentiments, nor does my engagement with you require it, nor duty permit it." Now, if Mr. Howe had the credulity to believe (credulity is no sin), "the developments which have been made respecting the doctrinal views of the liberal party," as portrayed by self-styled *orthodox* clergymen, and I have no reason to doubt his sincere belief in them, he has given a valid excuse. Had you not furnished me with this declaration of his, I should have resorted to living witnesses, who would testify to similar declarations made by him about the same time.

Here, then, we arrive at the conclusion of your third point. Mr. Howe subjected himself to the designation of "promise-breaker," though he had a sufficient excuse in his own mind for being one.

I give you full credit, gentlemen, for acknowledging "that Mr. Howe's feelings were sufficiently liberal up to" about five years after his settlement, as I stated in my book. But I dared not bestow upon him the epithet, *liberal*, lest I should be accused of endeavoring "to draw him over with artful cords to the liberal side." And I cannot forbear the reflection, how much more honorable, discreet, and prudent it had been for you and other abettors of the exclusive system, to have admitted at once the palpable truths I asserted, and to have defended him, if defence were necessary, wholly on the ground of conscientious scruples. But, instead of such an obvious and honest course, you and they have endeavored to conceal truth, distort the meaning of plain and intelligible

language, and make false deductions from premises which do not warrant them. In your anxiety to bring odium upon the actions of the minority of the ordaining council, you have unwittingly thrown the same upon those of Mr. Howe, by representing them as chaffering together, devising a method, and making a bargain, how he might answer certain questions, and jesuitically promise one thing, and mean another, or nothing at all; or make a promise which should be valid on the day of ordination, and not binding on the next; and that he might promise "to exchange with the regular clergy of this region, and not mean to exchange with Unitarians." Against such aspersions of Mr. Howe's character was the intention of the "characteristic note" you quoted under the former head, which I will now consider.

Having simply narrated the facts in my history, to the circumstance to which it relates, without in the least criminating any party, I appended this note to show, that whatever course Mr. Howe might have pursued in the strait into which the operations of the exclusive system had driven him, a fouler stain than either would have exposed him to had been put upon his character by his pretended friends; and also to charge the odium of duplicity upon those who deserved it. And it now appears by what you make manifest, and by the course you have pursued, that my showing and charging were correct. It has also been shown, that Mr. Howe acted according to the dictates of conscience and sense of duty, and not under the subterfuge of a jesuitical interpretation.

By your favorite figure, paralepsis, you fill a page with comments on this note, which confirm my last statement above. I know of no exclusive privilege clergymen have of exemption from reproof for chicanery. I make no discrimination in their favor, in my estimation of meanness and duplicity. I, however, can find no "ungracious *epithet*" bestowed on any one in my note.

And now, gentlemen, in view of all the evidence and all the developments exhibited, who, I ask you, are the guilty cause of injuring the character of the "dishonored and aspersed dead"? The one who first published to the world the false charge of "calumny"? or the innocent one, who successfully repelled that charge? The historian, who faithfully narrates a true series of events and actions? or the calumniators, who charge him unjustly "with wantonly violating a good man's grave," of being "a partaker of another man's sins," of "going *with malice prepense* to his grave," and who "make many other grievous complaints which they cannot prove"?

I ask you, gentlemen, once more to read attentively and critically the character I have given of Mr. Howe, and compare the whole with that which you and his pretended friends have bestowed upon him. I challenge a comparison. If mine should appear to candid, intelligent, disinterested men the better of the two, am I not entitled to some acknowledgments?

Having finished what I had to say on the main object of your Review, I proceed to matters of minor consequence. On page 33 you place an extract from my history, the language of which you think is calculated to make a false impression upon the minds of the uninformed; and you remind me of my responsibility for impressions, as well as language. I readily assume it, so far as it regards candid and intelligent readers. The language is so plain and the meaning so obvious, that the merest dunce cannot mistake it, and no fair critic can pervert it. No honest reviewer would pretend, that "a minority of the town, including a large majority of the members of the church," insinuated a *mere faction*, (fraction?) or "is suited or designed to make a false impression." But you say, "when taken in connexion with the uniform manner in which *I represent the balance of numbers* and influence as to the religious movements of the place." I have nowhere *represented any balance of numbers or influence* in this matter. This language of yours "is suited and designed," I boldly say, "to make a false impression on the uninformed." Was it "malice prepense," or malice innate, which called upon you "to correct a false impression" in this manner? Point the finger of scorn to a single instance of the "uniform manner" in which I have "represented the *balance* of numbers or influence," or retract the foul calumny, base as it is false.

Once only have I alluded to the size of the parties, except in the passage under consideration; and there I conceded to the seceders "a *large number* of the inhabitants of the town, including a great majority of the members of the church." In connexion with this, the ability to "build a commodious meeting-house," with a "steeple and clock," and to settle a "colleague pastor," is neither "suited" nor "designed" to intimate a "mere faction" or *fraction*. But you advert to your accustomed logic, "*nothing to the contrary*." And does it not as naturally follow, even by this, that the societies after division were nearly equal, as that one contained nearly the whole, and the other a "mere faction" or fraction? You seem to have forgotten the rule spoken of with approbation

at the commencement of your labors, that "historians generally content themselves with giving some general statement of the facts;" and the bitter complaint you there made, that my picture of the ecclesiastical affairs of the town should contain the *minutiæ*. For on page 34 you make a long array of circumstances, which you seem to think I ought not to have omitted, but which I deemed too minute for a general history. It is not usual, in stating the acts of aggregate corporations, to mention the numbers voting on different sides of a question, unless some particular necessity requires it. It would appear very "*particularizing*" in a historian of Massachusetts to state that Marcus Morton was elected governor by a majority of one vote. It would have been impossible, I find, had I been so disposed, to have pleased you, since your censures are so contradictory, sometimes complaining of particularizing and *minutiæ*, but oftener of brevity and omissions.

Besides other exceptions taken to this short and plain extract, one is to these words, "*chose to consider an expulsion;*" and I am appealed to as a lawyer to answer certain legal questions in relation to them. It would seem too much like "casting pearls before swine" to answer legal queries, and explain legal and constitutional rights, to men who do not know, or will not acknowledge, that the justices of our highest judicial tribunal are the interpreters of the *common* as well as *statute* laws, and that their decisions on both are equally "the law of the land," and equally obligatory on all good citizens. And inasmuch as the matters contained on the seven or eight pages next succeeding the above extract do not pertain to my history, being *minutiæ* improper for a place in it, I shall pass, after a few brief remarks, to page 42.

My first remark is, that your notions of legal rights and privileges, as expressed on the succeeding pages, and other parts of your Review, are in direct opposition to mine. Second, that your illustration made, by the figure, "hanging a beautiful surplice upon the angular joints and crooked limbs of an ugly man," is "characteristic" and worthy of its authors.

And third, that if Mr. Howe wished for a dissolution of his connexion with the town and church, to which he says he never objected, and considered it the proper course, it was his right and privilege to ask for it, and put that point in issue. The party desiring the dissolution should assuredly be the first movers for it. The church surely did not desire

it, and it nowhere appears that the town did. The people desired him to do as he had done the first five years of his ministry. Yourselves say, "There seems to have been no complaint," — "save violating an obligation to exchange." It was therefore not proper for the town to ask a dissolution, but for Mr. Howe to ask a dismission, if he or his friends desired it.

I now turn over to pages 42 and 43, where I find about an equal quantity of censure and approbation, I can hardly tell which predominates, of my contraction and expansion. Each of these qualities in my style is so often commented on and censured, that I am led to think, that I used neither to excess. You compare me in this to an author of my name, whose wide fame you seem to doubt whether I shall ever gain; and whom I first supposed to be the great Bishop Butler, whose *Analogy* has rendered his name immortal (though I was not aware of his celebrity for brevity and amplification); for I could not suppose you had formed any acquaintance with the writings of another well-known author of the same name, lest your visages in their perusal should be drawn into somewhat the shape of his who erst

"Grinned horribly a ghastly smile."

Of course I felt very much honored by the compliment; but, upon careful examination of your mode of reasoning, and finding that it bears so near a resemblance to that of Sir Hudibras and his squire Ralpho, when disputing about their churches, I am reluctantly constrained to believe, it was the poet, not the divine, of whom my style reminded you.

The burden of your next complaint is "something like a studied attempt to leave this church" (the church allied to the Evangelical Congregational Society in Pepperell) "altogether in the background, with scarcely an admitted existence." Let us examine the justice of this complaint. At the close of my fourteenth chapter, I had the first occasion to notice a second religious society in Pepperell. As introductory to building a meeting-house, the subject of that chapter, I said, "A large number of the inhabitants of the town, including a great majority of the members of the church, withdrew," &c. No "studied attempt" appears here. The next occasion, on which I could with propriety mention the church, is in the extract you last made. No omission is there chargeable. In the sentence following the extract, I used the expression, "Town or First Parish and Church proper." This rather implies existence than non-existence of another

church, and not an improper one in any other sense than not belonging to the First Parish, or being the First Church. Next, where I say, "The Rev. David Andrews was by invitation of the church and society ordained," &c. and, in the very next sentence, "became principal and sole pastor of the Ev. Con. Soc." * was it necessary to repeat the word *church* in the latter sentence to preserve its existence or "right to be"? And again I mention the election of deacons of *this church*. I had but one occasion more, in which I could with propriety introduce the word *church*. It seems to me, then, you are a little too captious even for reviewers to say, "Otherwise he is silent as to the being of such a body." If I said "*nothing to the contrary*," according to your own logic, your church exists. But on the occasion above mentioned, where I should have mentioned your church, and did not, I was stating that a certain anniversary was noticed by the Ev. Con. Soc. as a festival, without naming the church. Here let me say, gentlemen, that, although I think the church is included in the name of the society, the church members being also members of the society, yet, from not sufficiently noticing the title-page of Mr. Andrews' Discourse, I inadvertently gave the name of the society instead of "the church of Christ and Second Parish." If this shows a "studied attempt," or in any manner sets your church in an undeserved background, or endangers its "right to be," I humbly ask pardon, and *promise* to do all in my power to avert such a calamitous event. The alteration or amendment shall appear in my very next edition.

But pause: on page 47 you deny that the Ev. Con. Soc. was an actor on that occasion. Is there a distinction between the Ev. Con. Soc. and the second parish in Pepperell? By which authority shall I make my amendment? By that of the Rev. David Andrews, or by that of the Committee of which the Rev. David Andrews is chairman? "I pause for a reply."

The next topic you introduce raises the questions, What constitutes a *church*? what are its essential and other qualities, privileges, and attributes? Though this hardly comes within the range of a particular review of my history, and though I feel under no obligation to notice it, yet, as you seem to entertain some very vague notions both of what I

* Excuse me for abbreviating this name here and other places, on account of its length. I don't dispute its "right to be."

call a church and your own "picture" of one, I will try to enlighten you a little. And, first, I will state my own views, not of a Catholic or Episcopalian church, but of an Independent Congregational church of New England.

By *church*, I mean an indefinite number of persons voluntarily associated as disciples of Christ, for the purpose of rendering due obedience to his instructions and injunctions, particularly his ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, so called. So much I consider essential to the existence of a church. Thus constituted, it usually has for officers one or more pastors, or teachers, deacons, and sometimes other officers; but a destitution of any one or even of all these for a time does not necessarily destroy it. Also, it may or may not have a creed, in which every member is required to profess belief; and a covenant, by which the members promise to watch over, instruct, admonish, and comfort each other, in their religious lives and conversations. It may also, or may not, have by-laws for the particular observance of the members, and rules for their government. All these may be changed, altered, or annulled at pleasure, by a majority of the members, or as their by-laws may provide. Such church, usually composed of some of the inhabitants of a particular town, parish, or religious society, annexes the name of the town, parish, or society, of its locality, as *the church in Groton*, &c.; and, if there be more than one in the same locality, by numerical distinction, as *first* or *second church in Groton*, &c. This is merely for convenience of reference. And such church usually unites with the town, &c. in which it is located in the support of public worship; the town, &c. (including church members of course) transacting all secular matters, such as providing a place for meeting, music, and contracting with a minister, and the church uniting with it in the choice, invitation, and ordination of their pastor.

A church thus constituted and associated is, by a law of this Commonwealth, guaranteed the exercise and enjoyment of all accustomed privileges and liberties, church-order and discipline; and encouraged in the peaceable and regular enjoyment and practice thereof.

If a church of this description is "a church in the sense of civil law," or "in a civil sense," so be it, I object not, provided you offer it no abuse, or attempt to annihilate it. You distinctly affirm, that you "admit no such idea of a church of the Lord Jesus Christ as this." Very well: admit an idea of one of your own description; let us see what that is.

Permit me to quote from the Rev. D. Andrews' Centennial Discourse, as well as from your Review, to form the "picture."

Speaking of *the* church in Pepperell, which is unquestionably a perfect model, the pastor says, "These transactions led to the formation of the Ev. Con. Soc. to which at once the *church allied itself*, for mutual aid." Was this alliance "incidental" or "*conventional*"? If the latter, what are the conditions of the compact? Again he says, "A new parish of similar views with the church was formed, and has continued to act in harmony with the church." Once more, "This church has no ambitious claims for *rank* or *legality* to present. It yielded them," &c. Why so? If it is associated with a religious society or parish, as he says, it is as much under the protection of law, as much *a legal church*, as any in the Commonwealth.

But what say *you*, as a Committee of the same church? "We admit no such idea of a church," &c. You speak of it as a "religious and *spiritual* body." By *spiritual*, I understand incorporeal, invisible, intangible. "We own no such connexion between church and state," "no such dependence." "We maintain that a church is an independent body, in no sense the creature of a parish." "It has the elements of existence from a higher source, and of perpetuation entirely within itself." "Its relation to a parish is only *incidental* and conventional." "Its form consists of the proper and scriptural officers of a church. These are its organs, and it has no others."

This "picture" of a church so incongruous and inconsistent in its parts, were not the word *church* appended, might readily be mistaken for that of a *hobgoblin*, by believers in the apparition of such bodies, or at best, in the language of your church lawyer, "a speckled bird."

I should be pleased to learn, in what the "*incidental* and *conventional*" relations between a church and parish consist, and wherein they differ from my account of their connexion.

Notwithstanding your disclaimer to be such a church as is recognized by law, you *do* claim, if I understand you aright, to "rank" and be the original or First Church in Pepperell, "that spiritual body that began to be in 1747," and "wholly upon scriptural considerations and sanctions of ecclesiastical law." I am not sufficiently instructed in Scripture, I confess, to know on what passage thereof you rest your claim to rank the First Church in Pepperell; and I believe we have no code of ecclesiastical law in Massachusetts. Changing ground a

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little, as usual, you next state, that your "church rests its claim to be the true spiritual descendant of the First Church, upon two facts, which cannot be successfully controverted." First, "It is the only union of visible believers, in a church relation, that has continuously preserved an organized form from the first in this place, which form consists of the proper and scriptural officers of a church." Second, "That this body, thus regularly perpetuated in an organic form, with regular succession of spiritual generations of believers, has even from the very first continued to hold the same faith for substance of doctrine."

I presume, gentlemen, when you penned these two *lucid* sentences, you had the picture of your church "in the mind's eye," else you could not have so distinctly exhibited its symmetry. As I am dazzled with the brightness in which you have clothed it, I take the liberty to divest it, for convenient examination, of some of its radiance, and look upon it in the following dress. First, it is the only uninterrupted succession of church members and officers from its organization to this time. Second, it has always believed substantially the same creed.

The fact expressed by the first, I do not deny; but its tendency to support your claim, I do. I think, with your chairman, that by the act of secession, in 1831, you yielded your claim for rank, if not legality. But suppose you had not yielded it, saying nothing about law, which decides this point against you, has not another body at least equal claims with you to be the First Church? I do not hold with you, that a temporary destitution of officers annihilates a church; but that "the spiritual elements of existence and perpetuation within itself" would be able to put forth new "organs." If so, the fragment remaining after your secession, having its due proportion of spirituality and self-perpetuation, might enlarge by accretion, and supply itself with new organs, even after a lapse of seven or eight months. You concede "that these very few relics are a church, but not the spiritual body that began to be in 1747." And upon the fact that it retains "its earthly habitations and its material contents," you illustrate their position by one of your rhetorical figures, sadly inappropriate both in relation to the graveness of the subject, and the act it is intended to illustrate. What resemblance, pray, has the peaceable and persevering worship of church members, in the sanctuary, which they or their predecessors erected and own, to the cuckoo's depositing her egg in the sparrow's nest?

Your second incontrovertible fact, that your church has always embraced the same creed, no more establishes your identity and priority, than the first, even if your theory of identification were true. For, by your own showing, the First Church in Pepperell, in its early days, had no creed, except the Assembly's Confession, which you endeavor not very convincingly to call in for aid. It afterwards adopted a formulary, and subsequently still another; but these, you say, are "harmonious in *spirit*." But your claim on this ground has been ably considered, and shown to be utterly untenable, by the Rev. C. Babbidge, in his Centennial Address, to which I respectfully invite your attention.

But there is still another incontrovertible fact, which has not been considered, being probably newly discovered evidence. "The only two verbal formularies of faith, which this church has ever adopted, are published together, and are harmonious in the same paper envelope"! Out of abundant caution, why not bind up both with the Assembly's Confession? I will risk the bursting of their covering.

The conclusion at which you arrive at the close on this topic is, that you ought not to fall victims to my "*exclusive system*." My exclusive system, forsooth! How many churches in New England, think you, should I exclude by receiving none but those allied to some town, parish, or religious society? Not yours surely, for your chairman has asserted its alliance with the Ev. Con. Soc. in Pepperell. So you are safe from being "unchurched."

It is a stale joke for those, addicted to some ungracious habit, to accuse others of the same, so as to make pretence for equality; and, in calling hard names, to bestow that upon others which belongs peculiarly to themselves.

One paragraph more on the subject of church identity. By the use of "*The Church, &c.*" in sundry connexions to designate yours, you manifest a puerile tenacity to a *name*, as your chairman has asserted "*The Church in Pepperell*" to be. The word *church* is a common, not a proper noun, and with the article *the* prefixed and the place of its location annexed clearly indicates to the uninformed reader that there is but one church in Pepperell. In excuse for thus using it, he treats it as a proper noun; saying, "he takes it as he finds it," and "none but the church itself can change its name." If it were a proper name, convenience would not require an alteration. But since you acknowledge there are two assemblages of persons in Pepperell, by some called *churches*, common convenience seems to require something to distin-

guish them. But your petulance in this small matter is as harmless as it is silly. It unchurches no one, nor does it affect your identity or usefulness as a church. And though you may imagine there is as much preference in names as did Mr. Shandy when his boy was christened *Tristram*, instead of *Trismegistus*, I, with Uncle Toby and my namesake (my ancestor for aught I know) the corporal, "would not give a cherry-stone to boot;" for, says Trim (I think truthfully), "I fought as well when the regiment called me *Trim*, as when they called me *James Butler*. And Uncle Toby very modestly affirmed, that "he could have done no more at Namur than his duty, had his name been *Alexander*."

You now come to the last passage, on which you have to comment, which, though "singular" is yet in "harmony" with other parts of my book. To this, I cannot make the "retort courteous" in relation to your Review: there is nothing like "harmony" among your several animadversions. This topic is my notice of a festival held at Pepperell, January 29, 1847. Before noticing your comments, I must earnestly protest against the use of the word *centennial* as a noun substantive. It is an adjective, and requires some significant word of which to be an adjunct, such as festival, address, discourse, meeting, &c.

You intimate, that I deny you the honor of a centennial festival. Nothing was further from my intention. As I had occasion to notice the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of the First Church in Pepperell by two assemblies, held on different days, I deemed it proper to show how the discrepancy in computation of time happened, without imputing the slightest injury done by the omission of adding a certain number of days to complete a century; believing with you, that it was of no imaginable consequence, and that no "offence was committed against the rules of Christian propriety or morality." How could you say that I "seemed to deny you the honor of a centennial altogether"? Must I confess, this is in "harmony" with your other charges against me? and that it is "an offence against Christian propriety and morality" thus to charge me?

If you wished to celebrate two anniversaries, viz. the founding of the First Church in Pepperell, and the ordination of the Rev. David Andrews as colleague-pastor of the Ev. Con. Soc. and church allied to it, on one and the same day, and both did not occur on the same day, you had an undoubted right to "bring those two interesting anniversaries together" (if in your power); and none will deny the pro-

priety, that, in such case the less interesting should yield and conform to the greater and more important.

For my error in stating who noticed this anniversary, I have heretofore, I hope, made sufficient atonement; and I hope you, gentlemen, with equal condescension will in your next edition omit the sentence, "Neither was the society of which he speaks an actor on that occasion," that I may know which are in error, you or your chairman, and make my amendment accordingly. But there is another supposed mistake, which you notice, in this short paragraph. "It was," you say, a church *centennial*, instead of a *festival*. Well, "if *I have here made a mistake, I made it on purpose.*" *Festival* is the most appropriate word in the English language for me to have used on this occasion; whether in relation to a civic or religious commemoration or feast, whether noticed by a society or a church, and peculiarly so, as applicable to both. The ordinary as well as extraordinary observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is by divines frequently and properly termed *a festival*. What a pity it is, that, when dictionaries and lexicons are so plenty, and withal so very cheap, our literati (?) should be so inattentive to the common use of words! *

But there is another and more heinous offence given at the close of the paragraph under consideration. You say, "I have fallen into a slight mistake in informing the public, that the present pastor of this church performed the immodest as well as mysterious act in 1847 of describing his own character and success in the ministry down to the present time," "1848."

And is it even so? If it is, I am heartily sorry: to attribute by mistake, however slightly, any thing *mysterious* or even *immodest* to the pastor of the church allied to the Ev. Con. Soc. in Pepperell, would be the last offence I should hope to be guilty of. The truth is this. I wrote the paragraph in the same year 1847, in which the discourse mentioned was delivered, a few months after that since celebrious event. So the 1848 by you gratuitously and wrongfully annexed to the extract is a *slight mistake*. Perhaps precision requires, that I should have inserted the word *then* before *present time*, to render it certain I intended the time of delivery; or have used the word *year* instead of *time;* and

* For the meaning of assurance, centennial, festival, forfeit, pledge, promise, &c. see any dictionary at hand, especially Crabb's "Synonymes." *Rotate* may not be so easily found.

perhaps after all, to readers less astute (if such readers there be) than the Committee of the church in Pepperell allied to the Ev. Con. Soc. the words as they stand in my history, without "1848," will be understood aright. But, take it as it is, gentlemen; understand it in your own way, and "saddle upon me" (I use your own homely trope), "saddle upon me" an Irish bull, and be assured you will be fairly entitled to at least one of Sir John Falstaff's traits of character, when he said, "I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is *in other men*."

At length we have arrived at your closing remarks. And the first thing I would notice is your self-congratulatory assumptions of having "faithfully" discharged "the most unwelcome duty" of "detecting the sophistry and the misrepresentations, and of refuting the unrighteous charges, directed against the honored dead of your church, and against the church itself." Now, in my opinion, and I have the fullest confidence that I express the opinion of every unprejudiced reader capable of literary discernment, who will take the trouble to examine your Review, together with the two chapters of the work reviewed, no work of the kind was ever laid before an enlightened community which less deserved the character you claim for it.

If there was ever a pamphlet of its size which contained more sophistical reasoning, more misrepresentations suited and designed to distort, disguise, and conceal truth, more unfair, uncandid, and unchristian innuendoes, false imputations and charges, grosser abuse of the author reviewed, more silly, low, and inappropriate tropes and figures, and other literary faults and absurdities, I know not in what library or cabinet of the curious to search for it. Lord Timothy Dexter's "Pickle for the wise ones" might vie with it in some points, but not in all.

Next follows a dolorous account of your ungracious and humiliating task, so successfully accomplished; and how unwelcome, painful, and mortifying was the duty assigned you, how you "long and anxiously pondered," — "hesitated, delayed, and prayed to be excused," — till you seemed to be warned, both from the "skies" and the "grave," to proceed;

> "Me patris Anchisæ. ——
> Admonet in somnis, et turbida terret imago. —
> Interpres Divum fert horrida jussa per auras.
> Scilicet! is Superis labor est, ea cura quietos
> Sollicitat," —

when at length you put on the panoply, and buckle to the work. In a little less than two years,

"Matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses,"

a pamphlet, a pretended Review of a few pages of an unaspiring town history, issues from the press! Verily the prediction of the poet,

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus,"

is now fulfilled. How many errors have you corrected? How many false impressions have you removed? How many unrighteous charges have you refuted? and how many mistakes have you pointed out?

1. The anachronism, in relation to presenting the remonstrance to the ordaining council.

2. One of the seventy-nine not being a legal voter. (Doubtful.)

3. The Church of Christ and Second Parish, instead of Ev. Con. Soc.

4. The Irish bull.

If departed spirits can know and understand how faithfully their admonitions are here in this world observed and obeyed, you need be under no apprehensions of being a second time haunted and troubled with their injunctions on this behalf.

With seemingly compassionate solicitude, you suggest that your "allotted work may give pain in some quarters." As regards myself, gentlemen, give yourselves no anxiety. Your shafts, whether of wit, satire, or malice, alike unsound, pointless, and ill-aimed, have fallen harmless at my feet. They have in no instance penetrated the brain, the heart, or the gall. I presume from their character they have been equally imbecile in other "quarters." I hope so; for I should be in an unenviable position to have darts, under a dastardly pretence of being aimed at me, wound an innocent bystander.

One passage more, and I shall have done. You say, "We have spoken plainly; we believe, before God, truthfully: we trust we have not compromised the sacredness and dignity of the Christian character." I fear, then, the sacredness and dignity of your Christian characters will not stand very high in the estimation of some of your readers.

Near the commencement of this epistle, I remarked that I

was prepared, after noticing one of your strange assertions, to meet any other without surprise or astonishment. But, that five men of this enlightened age, professing to be Christians, can call God to witness, that they have in this pamphlet spoken *truthfully*, and trusting that they have not compromised the sacredness and dignity of their character as such, excites an emotion, if not of astonishment, surely of pity.

CALEB BUTLER.

Jan. 25, 1850.

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